"HONOR AMONG THIEVES," AN EXTRAORDINARY STORY, NEXT WEEK.

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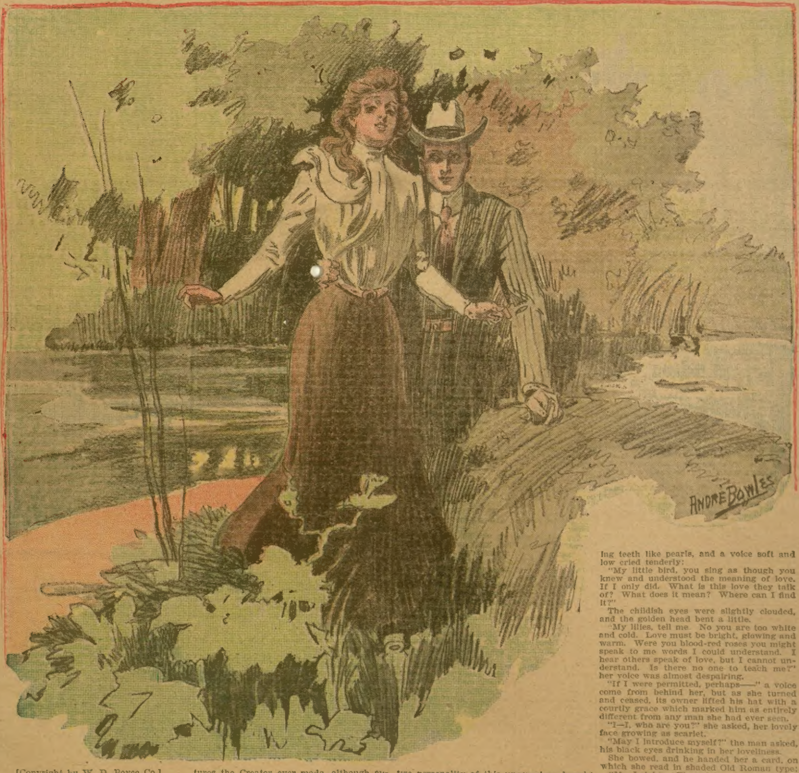
# LIKE MOTHER, LIKE DAUGHTER;

## Or, THE SHADOWS OF DESPAIR. By Constance Beatrice Willard.



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### CHAPTER I.

### THE FIRST LESSON.

A field of graceful lilies, white petaled, golden-throated, waving in the mellow sunshine, and in the midst of their beauty a young girl as fair and pure as the flowers themselves, formed a picture never to be forgotten, and certainly not by the man who was walking toward the motionless living statue of loveliness, for Vivian Fayettville was one of the most exquisite creatures the Creator ever made, although entirely unconscious of that fact.

A warm south wind was blowing, ruffling the golden hair of the girl, which lay on her neck and about her face like a cloud of glory, but slightly shading eyes as blue as the heavens above, and giving added emphasis to the rose-tints of a perfect complexion. Only sixteen summers had passed over this young head, and yet there were no traces of deeper feeling in eyes or face, although there was promises of much passionate energy and tenderness about the entire personality of this unconscious beauty as she stood there so quietly.

Not far away a brook, called Silver Brook because of the clearness of its waters, sparkeld and sung as it rippled over its shining pebbles, and several stately old elms were filled with twittering birds.

Suddenly she broke into an impassioned song, and then the girl moved, to turn toward the singer, her dimpled hands outstretching as though to grasp some of the wonderful melody.

Lips scarlet as haw berries, parted, showing teeth like pearls, and a voice soft and low cried tenderly:

"My little bird, you sing as though you knew and understood the meaning of love. If I only did. What is this love they talk of? What does it mean? Where can I find it?"

The childish eyes were slightly clouded, and the golden head bent a little.

"My lilies, tell me. No you are too white and cold. Love must be bright, glowing and warm. Were you blood-red roses you might speak to me words I could understand. I hear others speak of love, but I cannot understand. Is there no one to teach me?" her voice was almost despairing.

"If I were permitted, perhaps——" a voice come from behind her, but as she turned and ceased, its owner lifted his hat with a courtly grace which marked him as entirely different from any man she had ever seen.

"I—I, who are you?" she asked, her lovely face growing as scarlet.

"May I introduce myself?" the man asked, his black eyes drinking in her loveliness.

She bowed, and he handed her a card, on which she read in shaded Old Roman type:

"Mr. Leighton Flemish."

"My friends call me Leigh, pronounced Lee," he added.

The girl, still blushing, held the white pasteboard daintily between her fingers, and smiled a little.

"Will you forgive me for eavesdropping?" the man continued, and as she looked at the handsome figure, her heart began to beat more rapidly than she had ever known it and she felt a vague delight that M ton Flemish had invaded her dom

"I suppose I will have to," she

ly, remembering her outspoken thoughts of a few moments before.,

"To show me that you do, please sit down over there on that delightful looking rustic seat, and let me have the pleasure of a little chat with you," the young man continued, easily, smiling down into her blue eyes, which seemed to him the most expressive he had ever seen.

Leighton Flemish was not used to sue in vain. He was too thorough a master of the art of flirting not to know just how to frame his words, and little Vivian Fayettville, was no match for him.

The man was so magnificently handsome, too, like a prince, with glowing, black eyes, heavy, black brows straight across his white brow; hair fine as silk and black as night, flung beack carelessly from his broad, although rather low brow, and features as clear cut as those of a young god. He was over six feet in height, beautifully proportioned, with the muscles of an athlete, and the elegance of a society man. He was dressed in the height of fashion, wearing a light gray outing suit, a white silk shirt, and pearl gray silk tie. His graceful head was crowned by a forty dollar Panama, and upon his white hands gleamed a diamond worth more than all Vivian owned.

All this she saw as she looked at him, more she could not discover, for she was but sixteen, and so inexperienced of the world. One who had sufficient experience could have read in the handsome face, selfishness, cruelty and a certain lawlessness, which put personal pleasures before everything else. Such a person would have been able to see that Leighton Flemish would make love as long as it pleased his royal self, and no longer. If such a person had known of him, she would have remembered how many scandals had been connected with his name; she would have been able to estimate the number of hearts he had broken; the houses he had desolated; the husbands he had robbed of wives; the fathers of daughters. Vivian, however, knew nothing of all this, and to her he was a wonderful revelation.

On his part, this man of the world saw something rather rare in these days, a regular child-woman, as innocent and sweet as the lilies, and as ignorant of any wrong doing. Oh, if the angels in heaven ever weep over the destiny of humans, they must have shed tears upon that day, when Vivian Fayettville met Leighton Flemish!

"So the little girl was wondering about love, was she?" the man asked as the two took their places on the rustic seat, where Vivian had dreamed away many a sunny hour.

The fair face flushed again, then the girl said, simply:

"Yes, why not? I read so many strange things about love that I get confused, indeed, I do."

"For instance?" the dark eyes were filled with a strange light, the rather cruel lips were hidden beneath a heavy mustache.

"Well, the poets say so many things. This morning I read:

"'The sweetest joy, the wildest woe is love.'"

"The poet is right," the man returned, fastening his glowing eyes upon the girl's tender, blue ones. "The sweetest happiness earth can give comes through love."

"And the rest, 'the widiest woe?'" she cried.

"And that, too, and yet there is such tender, passionate joy in even woe, when it comes of love that many of us are willing to drain to the dregs the cup of sorrow, if we can but sip of the wine of pleasureable rapture."

Vivian felt herself quivering with happiness, and her voice trembled as she said, softly:

"Then another poet writes:

"'It is better to have loved and lost,
"'Than never to have loved at all.'"

"And that is true, too. Think for yourself. Are you willing to go through life without any knowledge of love? Tell me, if you knew for certain that you were going to suffer greatly, would it deter you from grasping the draught which you knew would intoxicate you with happiness?"

"I think I would take the risk," she said, shyly.

"And you would do right, for love pays well, although it demands much."

"I would give all, if I received full pay," she cried, her face flushed, her blue eyes like stars.

"I think you would," he returned softly, and she believed it was love which shook his voice.

"Tell me something else you have read," he demanded, and to cover her confusion, Vivian continued:

"'Love is life's end! an end, but never ending.'"

"How beautiful!" he cried, though he was thinking of her and not the verses.

"Aren't they, and yet the words I like most are those, and two pearly tears stole into the soft, blue eyes, and the red lips quivered:

"'True love gives all and asks nothing; stops at nothing, and courts a soul's peril but a light thing, if love be gained.'"

For a moment even the man of the world was startled as he heard this child quoting such words as these, and he asked slowly:

"Do you understand what such words mean?"

"No. I came across them this morning, and I was wondering over them when you heard me talking to myself," she confessed.

"So you want to understand love?" he asked, and she, looking straight at him, returned:

"Indeed, I do."

How soft and low was his voice, as he whispered:

"I wonder if you will let me teach you?"

Suddenly the woman rose in her, and she asked, lightly:

"Can you?"

He answered the challenge, manlike, by kissing her full upon her mouth, crying:

"What do you think? I love you sweetest, and I know I can teach you to love me. That is the way love is known. We under[illegible] love, when we experience it. Can I [illegible]u love me?" and his eyes sunk into [illegible]ough he knew only two well that her girlish heart was touched by his fascinations.

Like a flash her girlhood dropped from her, as though burned by the scorching flame of the man's blighting passion, and with drooped eyes, she whispered:

"I think you can," and then she lay against his heart and he was showering kisses upon her half averted face.

## CHAPTER II.
## ON THE THRESHOLD.

Vivian Fayetteville was an orphan, who knew nothing of either father or mother. She had been reared by a maiden aunt, who immediately put a stop to all questions by saying grimly:

"Sometime I will tell you about them, until then you are better without knowing."

These words had frightened the sensitive child, although she did not know all that might lie behind them, and from the time she had been so answered, she had never sought to know more. Hers had been a lonely childhood and girlhood, for her aunt had kept her from associating much with other children, and the day she met Flemish was the first in which she had enjoyed talking with such a man, so no wonder she listened to him, feeling that he was more like a god than a human being.

After he had covered her golden hair, her fair face and dainty hands with kisses, he had controlled himself, and talked to her in his smooth, seductive voice, telling her of various places he had visited, and of the wonders he had seen until her desire for travel was thoroughly aroused.

"Oh, you have shown me a new world," she sighed at last, "one of which I knew absolutely nothing. How stupid and ignorant I must seem to you."

The man spoke truly when he replied:

"My darling, you appear anything but stupid. I never saw anyone so wonderful as you."

"Can you mean it?" she cried, joyously.

"Just let me show you."

No wonder the child who had never met with anything but indifference if not almost dislike, expanded under such words, and that her heart sang with joy.

"I will be so glad to let you show me; I think you have already," and her eyes were raised trustingly to his.

Are there really some men without consciences? Is it possible that such as Leighton Flemish never know their moments of remorse. Many a time before he had spoken ardent words of love to fair women, watching the love light dawn in their eyes, often had he broken down barriers and destroyed honor and purity, but this was the first time he sought to soil a young girl's sweet confidence and virtue, yet he did not pause. He saw a prize within his reach, and he reached out an eager hand, not pausing to think how his touch would defile the innocent bloom.

Bending toward her, until his hot breath scorched her cheek, he said rapidly:

"I want to take you to those lands of which I have told you."

She gave a glad cry. Remember this child had no mother. She knew almost nothing about the world or the moral laws which controled it. She realized that there was such an institution as marriage, but that was all. She was as ignorant and innocent as a child not yet able to talk, and she was pitted against this gay, handsome, conscienceless man of the world, who had no care but to secure his own pleasure.

"Do you really, will you?" she asked, clinging to his arm.

"Will I? Well, I rather think I will, if you'll come, will you?" he cried in his turn.

"Come? Of course, why shouldn't I? I know aunt will be glad enough to get rid of me," and she gave a little sigh.

In their conversation, the whole simple life of the child had been laid bare to him in her artless words, and he knew there were no men back of her, only a cross aunt, who hid her history from the girl as something shameful.

"She may not let you go with me," he suggested. It was no part of his plan to have her confide her flirting to anyone.

"Not let me go? Why she must. It is the chance of my life," and the red lips drooped so entrancingly, that Leighton stooped and kissed them madly.

"All that is true, but I feel certain she will not let you go, she will say you are too young."

"I'm not, please do not let her stop me. I cannot stand this life," and the little figure shook with apprehension.

"Do you feel any love for me?" he asked, raising the sweet face with a finger under the dimpled chin.

Again a deep flush stained the delicate skin, then a hushed voice said:

"I think I adore you," and then their lips met.

"That settles it. I will take you, sweet, and I tell you now I am going to do it. No use to say a word. I know your aunt will object. I will simply run away with you."

"Run away with me?" she asked, laughing.

"Yes, run away with you. How would my precious little girl like to go to the countries I have talked of, and move under skies as blue as her eyes, in sunshine as mellow a gold as her hair? How would she like to live a great, long life of love with me for teacher, lover and husband?"

He watched the young face very narrowly as he said the last word, but it did not change.

"Then you want to marry me?" she asked cheerfully.

"Of course, my love, in my own way, a dear sweet way, love's way," he whispered, and she nestling up to him conscious of nothing wrong. She had come across the words in her readings in books, half falling to pieces in the old attic, and took what he said as part of the wonderful new life opening before her.

"Then, precious one, will you come to me, tonight?" he asked.

"Where?" came back.

"Right here. What other place so appropriate? You come dressed for traveling. I will then take you away from this old, hard, cold life into one so beautiful and bright you will never know any sorrow or unhappiness, wrapped close to my heart by my love."

No wonder the voice which had enthralled women of the world, used to all that men can say, charmed this ignorant girl, who was utterly uninformed of sin. She had not the slightest notion that she was doing anything wrong, or that before she went away so trustingly with him, it was absolutely necessary that a ceremony be said over them, and that the laws of church and state be invoked to protect her. As trustingly as though he were her god, she smiled and promised, and with passionate kisses he finally let her go, and stood watching her as the graceful figure wound its way through the lilies, now hanging a little from the heat, out of his sight.

"She's the dearest, sweetest little thing I have ever come across, and I will be very good to her," he mused as he finally turned sharply on his heel, crushing as he did so, a lily, just as he had planned to crush a girl's soul, equally spotless.

## CHAPTER III.
## THE REALIZATION.

"Precious little one."

These pregnant words were whispered by a man with eyes like night, which shone as they rested upon the flowerlike face of a golden-haired girl, pure as a lily, and yet destined for one of the hardest fates woman can know.

"Tell me you love me," came from his passionate lips seeking hers.

The girl hesitated, her sweet face flaming, her eyes blue-purple like violets drenched with the soft rain of heaven, and he cried almost angrily:

"You do not love me, you do not understand true love. It will break my heart."

At this she raised her tender eyes, and looking at him bravely, whispered:

"I love you as my life."

"That is easily lost," he returned, looking deep into those wonderous eyes.

"Then as my soul," she declared.

"That too can be lost," he reminded her, his lips crushing hers with mad passion.

"Then as my hope of eternity," came from the dewy childish lips, upon which his were the only kisses that had been pressed.

"Sure of that?"

She could only cling to him, and whisper over and over again:

"I love you, I love, you are my all, my only hope," and he listening, could contemplate her ruin. Yet, as the world goes, this man was not as great a villain as he appears, for he would have scorned to wrong a man, to prove false to his promised word given to a man, or to do anything not justified by a strict code of honor. In the face of her innocence, ignorance and purity, he was planning to take from her all that was most dear, and give her in return a tarnished honor, a ruined life, oceans of tears, and heartbroken remorse. Still, for every pang he was lying up for her, this man was destined to suffer deeply. If she was to dim her lovely eyes with tears, his were to fall upon his heart and sear it forever. In this one case, heaven is to be just, although the passion-maddened man does not know it, and even if he did, it is doubtful if he would pause. Many times before, he has allowed his wicked desires to rule him, and why not now?

And she? The lovely, guileless girl, with her hair of gold and eyes like violets? Sometimes it seemed as though the fates conspire against women, and that those who have the curse of wonderful beauty had been better dead than to live to know the misery their loveliness brings. If she had known, would she have turned back? Who can tell. She loved him, this tender young Vivian, and perhaps she would have believed in him after all. Women are wonderfully trusting. God made them so.

She loved him, and with her hands full of lilies her heart as pure as they, and her eyes alight with their mutual love, for he did love her, she had gone to meet him, and her life long misery, and so begins the history of her womanhood, which was to be dyed red with the shamefulness of her unconscious wrong doing.

## CHAPTER IV.
## A FORSHADOWING OF THE FUTURE.

"Take me up, please," cried a childish treble, as a black-haired little creature held up pleading arms to a handsome young fellow, mounted on a prancing Chestnut.

"I can't Bettie, be sensible like a good girl," he laughed, looking down at the tiny creature.

"I think you're a beast, Dean Kingston," the spoiled child cried, stamping a tiny foot, tears of indignation filling her eyes.

The good-natured young man laughed again, and bending down, caught her by one arm, and dexterously swung her in front of him, saying as he did so:

"Now what am I?"

The little thing grinned, tossed back her curls, and said saucily:

"What you ought to be, to live up to your rank, my Lord Kingston."

Lord Kingston threw back his head and fairly shouted. The child was too funny for anything.

"And what might that be, Bettie?" he asked, holding her tight, as he cantered away.

"Oh, a gentleman."

The young earl looked at the lovely little face, which gave promise of great beauty, and asked, with difficulty keeping his face straight:

"Then you think that a member of the peerage can be a gentleman, eh, Bettie?"

A sharp look flashed from the sparkling dark eyes of the little girl into the brown ones of Lord Kingston, as she said quite simply:

"You can."

"Thanks," he said, laughing now.

"I like you Dean," the child continued.

"Pleased, I'm sure, dear."

"And I think I'll marry you," she continued, speaking very gravely.

"That's sweet of you," Lord Kingston replied, trying not to laugh. In spite of himself he knew that a good many of the opposite sex much older than little Lady Bettie would gladly marry him, for in addition to being a lord, he was extremely wealthy.

"Yes, I could love you," she resumed, searching the handsome young face.

"You don't say? Well, little one, perhaps you could if the necessity arose, because you know very little about me," and he sighed, for he was still very young, and the follies of his young manhood seemed very venial to him just now.

"I think I know you pretty well," the child said, decidedly. "You're a good shot, ride well, and take your fences like a hero. You are generous because it doesn't cost much to be that, but I don't know how'd it be if you had to deny yourself. Your chief fault is being too soft with women," and she paused, looking up into the eyes now grown rather sober. The young lord knew that the child was repeating what she had heard someone else say, but he wondered if he did allow women to pull the wool over his eyes too easily.

"You're not mad?" asked the child.

"Not in the least, little one,' he said, stooping and brushing her rounded cheek with his lips, "but you mustn't repeat what others say, even about me."

"How'd you know papa said that?"

"I didn't know that he said it, but I knew that some one older than you had told you such things. What do you think yourself?" and he smiled in a way young ladies found so delightful.

Lady Bettie laughed outright, and throwing her arms about his neck, kissed him warmly, crying:

"You're a bully good fellow," and as he laughed again at the word which she had so evidently picked up, Lord Kingston had no idea that one of his own countrymen, one who was to become closely associated with him, was drawing from a girl, as innocent and pure as this little child, her opinion about his unworthy self. Lord Kingston, little Lady Bettie, handsome Leighton Flemish and poor, beautiful Vivian were to become strangely associated and to learn many dearly bought lessons before they were a decade older.

## CHAPTER V.
## THE PRICE SHE PAID.

"And I tell you I will not."

"Certainly you will."

"I think that by now you would know me."

A deep sigh was accompanied by the words:

"I do know you for a heartless, foolish, vain woman, to whom the ties which usually bind women, are as nothing, but nevertheless, I am now master."

A haughty head was thrown back, an impassioned voice cried angrily:

"The man has yet to be born who will ever be my master."

A man's voice returned, stern and uncompromising:

"Madame, a year ago I would have bowed my head and remained silent, but now I tell you that I am master. For years you have kept away from me, denied me my daughter, but your day is over. On account of what I am today, I can dictate terms. I have consulted my attorneys, and they tell me that I have good grounds for divorce."

"For divorce," with a scream of real terror.

"Just that. You have remained away from me, refusing to live with me as my wife for all these years. Now you are willing enough to do so, but I tell you honestly that if it were not for my daughter, I would let them divorce you and live my life out alone."

"A nice sense of justice you have," sneered the woman.

"Why do you say that? I married you secretly, I confess that, Katherine, but I was willing to do so openly, and pleaded with you for years to come to me and let us live together as man and wife, and you have always refused. Now I dictate these terms. We will publically acknowledge that fateful marriage, state that we have a daughter, go after her, and then begin life under the wonderful conditions which now surround us. Do you agree?"

The woman looked into the stern face, and saw but little to remind her of the light-hearted, loving boy she had twisted about her fingers years before, so bowing her haughty head, accepted the yoke of motherhood, and secured thereby the coronet of a Countess.

## CHAPTER VI.
## THE AWAKENING.

In a charming suite of apartments overlooking the Campana, in the great city of Rome, sat one of the most beautiful women in the Eternal City, her little hands, loaded down with costly rings, lying in her lap, her sweet face slightly clouded.

The soft golden hair is now dressed by skilled fingers, and the slender, graceful figure clothed in Parisian garments, and yet Vivian Fayetteville is still the same sweet girl, with this subtile difference, her soft, blue eyes are gradually opening to the realization that she is not as other women.

When that knowledge first came to her, she even would have found it difficult to say, but as she sits here, so lovely, surrounded by every luxury that money can buy, and secure in the possession of an ardent love, she suddenly feels as though she had made some terrible mistake, what, she does not know.

As yet she is unaware that she is not Leigh's wife. Upon the little third finger of her left hand is a broad wedding ring, surmounted by a costly diamond keeper, and she has no knowledge to tell her that it means nothing unless placed there by minister or officer of the law. She knows that they are not traveling under the name of Flemish, for he has told her that for family reasons he is calling himself Garretson, his middle name, but she has heard herself addressed as Mrs. Garretson, and that is enough for her trusting nature.

Who was there to tell her that the little ceremony he and she went through when she joined him at that rustic seat the night of the day she met him, was nothing.

He had taken her little hand in his and asked:

"Vivian do you love me?"

"Of course I do," she had replied trustingly.

"Will you go with me as my wife?"

"If you want me."

"Then, dear, you are my wife," he had whispered, and slipped on the heavy wedding ring. The next day he had bought the diamond, and from that time on, had loaded har down with jewels, fine clothes and every luxury he could think of, but he kept her away from everyone who could contaminate her purity, for gradually he was realizing what a precious thing this girl was becoming, and to regret his selfish wickedness. Leighton Flemish was slowly, but truly realizing that Vivian was a woman of whom a king might be proud, and to long to display her to his world of society and fashion. It cut him to the heart to see how gentle and trusting she was, and already he was beginning to plan how he could undo the wrong, and set her right in the eyes of the world without allowing her to know how she had been wronged.

Just at this time, however, he made one great mistake, he allowed her to read, and it was through books came his undoing.

As she sits there this bright morning, looking out over the wonderful scene before her, Vivian is wondering, asking herself some wild questions.

In the book she has been reading is an account of a betrayal so like her own, that it seems almost the history of it.

With her white brow clouded, the young girl stretches out her little white hand, and takes up the book which is to bring such desolation to her, and reads:

"'But my dear, such a ceremony is not a marriage,' Lady Angles said gravely.

"'What is it then?' asked the trembling girl who stood before her.

"'Nothing at all, simply so many words strung together. I cannot believe you were so foolish as to believe your lover when he said that you were married.'

"'I did believe him,' sobbed the unhappy girl, falling to Lady Angels' feet in despair.

"'No one will credit you with such ignorance,' was the stern reply.

"'Then, if I am not his wife, what am I?' came the heart-rending question.

"'Yes, what are you? Simply a woman who has degraded herself, who has forever forfeited her right to the society of decent women, by living with a man on whom she has no possible legal claim. You are his mistress.' and Lady Angels' voice was cold as ice.

"'But we went through a ceremony between ourselves,' sobbed the hapless victim of a man's wrong doing.

"'That can make no possible difference, unless you were married by a clergyman or some officer of the law duly authorized to marry, you are simply a woman living in sin,' came the awful words."

It is impossible to describe the effect this written conversation had upon the innocent, lovely girl, who had never heard of sin, except in a vague way. Not for a moment did she question, she knew that she was like the girl in the book, and that all the terrible names applied to that young creature applied to her. She had taken a few words exchanged between the man she thought she loved and herself as all that was necessary. She had sinned the great sin, not through wickedness, even then she saw that, but because she trusted too much.

Suddenly she sprung to her feet, her face flushed, her eyes gleaming:

"I must not stay here," she cried.

Where was she to go? She had gone away from her home without a word; could she return?

"I must get back, I dare not stay a minute. It was bad enough when she did not know, but now it would be terrible.

"I knew no better, dear God," she whispered, looking up into the clear sky, then hid her face, feeling as though she had no right to pray.

Suddenly she sprung to her feet, goaded into action. Feverously she went to her purse and found sufficient money to take her home, just that and no more.

"I have to take it because I have none," she thought, with eyes which burned.

Hastening with fingers that trembled, she took out a handsome street costume, her least trimmed hat, and a veil. Into her dressing bag, she put a few toilet necessities, and into a small valise a change of underwear, and after some thought a sheer, white, wash dress, for she knew that none of her old clothing would fit her, for she had grown.

Poor, hapless girl, still so young and innocent, in spite of the scorching flames which had passed over her!

After she was dressed, her eyes fell upon her costly rings, and she tore them off, all but the ring with which he had pretended to wed her. That she kept, although it meant so little after all. Then, dressed for traveling, shorn of her luxuries, Vivian Fayetteville went to the desk which she had so seldom used, and sitting down wrote in her unformed, girlish hand:

"I do not know why you have done this wicked thing, but I understand now that I never have loved you, simply the person I thought you were. I am going and I hope I will never lay my eyes upon your wicked face again. Oh, shame, shame, to treat me so, when I did trust you just like I did God and the angels. All seem to have abandoned me, but at least I will not be wicked any longer."

How her young heart ached! She said in that letter that she no longer loved him, but she knew that this was not true, for like so many a woman both before her and those who came after, she did love him. Once a good woman loves, she can never call back her gift. Sometimes she thinks she loves, when it is only the ideal she has cherished, and then true love can come laten.

Poor, hapless girl! Bereft at once of her love and her innocence, she was to be greatly pitied, and not blamed. If she had been told that a red hot iron would bring pleasure if she grasped it, and she had never heard of fire, would she be blamed for the burn which would have eaten into her hands? Her unconscious wrong doing had been just as innocent, this poor young girl, victim of man's lust and dishonor. She knew but little of all this, though, her young heart was only filled with grief and despair, and it is a great wonder that she did not end the life which had become so useless to her.

This strong story of a young girl's trust and a man's perfidy will be continued in the Ledger issue of next week. Very strange and interesting situations develop as the narrative unfolds. The reader should follow it to the end. Now is a good time to subscribe for the Ledger. As a story paper it is acknowledged to have no superior anywhere. Great stories of romance and mystery, of adventure and fascinating detective work, of the exploits of boys and girls, together with poetry and humor are steadily appearing in these pages. You should take the Ledger regularly. If you have not yet subscribed or your subscription has expired, send in your order for the paper at once. Boys who would like our cameras and ladies who desire the latest patterns are requested to note that we are giving these fine premiums absolutely free, as announced on pages thirteen and fifteen.

# A STRANGE GAME.

Doctor Walter Mandeville sat in his office, with a decanter and glass beside him, and a newspaper in his hand. An incredulous and mocking sneer disfigured his usually handsome, though dark and somewhat sinister, countenance, as he read, half aloud, the following paragraph:

"A terrible instance of divine wrath has just started our community. A blasphemer has been stricken down in the very act of defying the power of Heaven. The wretched unbeliever, in a moment of madness, called upon his Maker to strike him dead, if He dared thus assert his omnipotence, and, lo! at the very instant, there came a lightning-flash from the stormy sky, and smote him to the earth, a blackened corpse."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Mandeville mockingly; "what fools and cowards men are! Because this man was the accidental victim of a natural phenomenon, his frightened fellows seized upon the coincidence to make a providential sensation of it. Pshaw! If such a power did exist, I should long since have been its victim. I have braved the divine wrath, as they call it, often enough. But it is all a fable, a delusion, a remnant of superstition, a——"

He poured out a glass of wine and drained it; throwing the journal contemptuously aside, proceeded to work upon a skeleton, which he was engaged in putting together, until far into the night, when, the decanter being empty, and his task finished, he retired to his sleeping-chamber, where his wife kept an anxious vigil for his coming. He answered her mild reproach with a caress, and a mocking jest at the same time, the latter of which caused her to shudder, and exclaim:

"Oh, Walter, how dreadful! For heaven's sake be silent, or some a[illegible]l thing will surely happen to us!"

But he only replied:

"I should like to see the awful thing, Margaret. You are a child to believe in such silly stuff!"

And then he fell asleep, with the skeptic sneer still curling his lips.

Walter Mandeville was an infidel and a blasphemer. He scorned religion, and lauged in the face of Providence.

Yet he was a man of talent, and the only physician of capacity in a circuit of twenty miles round the village wherein he dwelt. Therefore was he so far prosperous and successful.

He had come to Laura Vale ten years before, a young man just graduated from a celebrated medical college, and after five years of sedulous attention to his professional duties, finding himself established in a steadily increasing practice, he had wooed and wedded Margaret Hart, the orphan daughter of his professional predecessor. The growth of his infidelism had been gradual, or, at all events, his unbelief had not obtruded itself until within a year or so, and had been apparently associated with an increasing love of stimulants. He now drank hard, but still not to a degree that unfitted him for his medical labors.

That Margaret was far from happy is scarcely necessary to state; but she knew how to "suffer and be strong" in her love for her erring husband, though it was apparent that her physical health was slowly but surely giving way before the strain upon her mental faculties engendered by Walter's evil proclivities. They had as yet no children; but their mutual desire for offspring seemed now about to be realized. And it was at this very time that Mandeville's atheistic infatuation assumed the type of a monomania in its intensity and fiendishness.

When Mandeville rose next morning, his wife was too ill to follow his example. Her maternal agony had commenced, and the evening of that day saw a new immortal soul clothed with the visible raiment of the earthly flesh. A child was born to them.

For the ensuing week Mandeville was a most tender and devoted husband, as well as a skillful anl untiring physician to his suffering wife and her scarcely less suffering infant.

But it was in vain. Retribution had seemingly begun. A fortnight passed, and found him childless. A month, and he stood alone by the fresh-filled graves of all he loved on earth. Margaret and her infant were together in heaven!

This double blow should have chastened the rebellious spirit of the stricken husband and father. But it did not. On the contrary, it simply maddened him. He gave himself up henceforth to his twin idols—Satan and the bottle! Gradually his practise went from him. Another physician came and settled in the village—a Christian gentleman, who thought that healing the sick was a mission sanctified by divine precept and example, and so proclaimed it. Mandeville laughed at him and scorned him; but the village folks respected, and believed, and welcomed him.

After five years of unavailing struggle against the newcomer, Doctor Mandeville gave up the contest, and relinquished all attempts to retain his professional practice. Having a sufficient fortune for all his wants, he devoted himself to scientific investigation, chiefly with a view to confirm his infidel creed, and in a desultory and fitful way, interrupted by long intervals of solitary and moody tippling.

So ten years passed, and Mandeville's hair grew gray, and his eye dim, and his gait unsteady. People pitied and shunned him. He returned scorn for pity, and secluded himself in his habitation more than ever.

At length the fame of Daguerre's discovery reached him, and while he was vaguely pursuing the study of this new art, a daguerreotpyist came to Laurel Vale, and set up a studio. Mandeville was one of his earliest patrons, and had pictures taken, not only of himself, but of all the anatomical preparations in his cabinet. This collection of bones and other relics of humanity, grotesquely grouped, he hung round his study walls, and held Bacchanalian discourse with them over his bottle.

Paul Skelter, the daguerreotypist, was a wandering Bohemian sort of fellow, who easily humored Mandeville's strange whims, and occasionally was his boom companion, until the doctor thoroughly scared him by his horrible blasphemy, after which, though he still worked for him when called upon, he never revisited his house.

"The doctor," said Paul, "was a Mandeville by name, and a demon by nature."

* * * * * * * * * *

Doctor Walter Madneville sat in his study one blustering day of March, with the inevitable bottle and glass beside him. His face wore an evil expression, heightened by the spirits he had drunk, and he gazed round upon his ghastly picture-gallery and cabinets with a fiendish smile, laughing now and then to himself, as some sacrilegious thoughts crossed his morbid brain. Suddenly his eyes rested upon the skeleton he had so ingeniously jointed years ago, and a strange fancy seized upon him.

"Good! Capital!" he exclaimed. "Life is a game, they say. Well, ha! ha! ha! I will play for mine against fate, or Providence, or whatever they choose to call it. Let me see. Yes! that will make a glorious picture. I'll leave it to the church in my will. Come, old fellow"—to the skeleton—"we'll have a last famous game together."

Thus muttering, he took the skeleton carefully apart, wrapped it up in a compact bundle, went to a drawer of his table, took therefrom a chessboard and men, and putting the whole under his arm, strode from the house, heedless of the wind, straight to the rooms of Paul Skelter, the daguerreotyper.

The artist was alone and dozing.

"Skelter," said Mandeville, "wake up, man, I've brought you a splendid subject for a picture. Get your plates and things ready, while I arrange the group. Don't stare at me, man; but go to work. It's a joke I'm going to play, that's all."

Paul knew Mandeville too well to ask for further details, and went quietly about his preparations.

Meanwhile, Mandeville placed a table in the proper light, rejoined his skeleton, seated it at the table in a chair, spread the chess-board on the former, arranged the pieces in a certain manner upon it, and put a chair for himself opposite the grinning, fleshless anatomy.

When all was ready, he sat down, and calling Paul's attention, said:

"I'm going to try a delicate experiment; I sha'n't stop to explain it to you just now. You observe that these chessmen are so arranged that a single move of the black knight checkmates the white king. Well, I place the finger of this skeleton upon the black knight in such a way that the least forward motion of the said finger effects the fatal move. Now I take the white pieces for my own, and now—I await your readiness to take us in this very interesting position. Isn't it odd, eh?"

"I should think it was!" exclaimed Paul, staring at the tableau. What a picture! and what is the name of——"

"Never mind now," interrupted Mandeville. "Take the picture. When you are ready, say, 'Now;' that's all."

A moment or two passed.

"It is impossible," said Mandeville to himself, "that this skeleton can move its fingers by its own volition. I have so placed it that any jar or shock is equally impossible unless made on purpose. So, then, if there be an omnipotent Being, I call upon Him to show it by moving that finger, and checkmating me. And I avow my utter belief in any such Being, and defy Him to the test!"

"Now," cried Paul.

There was a few instants' deadly stillness, during which Mandeville sat with a stony gaze, directed over and beyond the chessboard and its fatal array.

"Done!" cried Paul, clapping the cover on the camera.

Mandeville took a long breath, and slowly turned his eyes toward the game. He fixed them first upon the grinning skull, then passed them slowly down the rigid arm, along the bony hand, over the gaunt——"

"Ha! the skeleton finger has moved. I have lost, by——"

It was so. The finger had moved forward—the black knight had advanced—the white king was checkmated.

* * * * * * * * * *

In a large mansion pleasantly situated on the banks of a picturesque stream, amid lofty trees, and fair lawns, and blooming gardens, but surrounded by a high and rugged wall of hewn stone, with great gates, like those of an ancient "keep"—in this mansion are many strange and sorrowful spectacles; melancholy wrecks of human intelligence, that walk purposeless along its broad corridors, or howl wofully and wildly from its strong-walled, triple-barred chambers. But, perhaps, the saddest, most harrowing of them all is that of a man with snow-white hair, and feeble, trembling gait, who wanders up and down, and down and up, hall and chamber, and lawn and garden, ever and anon stopping, and clenching his nerveless hands, and crying in a wailing tone:

"It moved, the skeleton finger moved. I have lost! I have lost! I have lost!"

Then he is seized with a horrible shuddering, and falls writhing to the ground, but rises anon, and goes on his uncertain way, up and down, down and up, till the demon takes possession of him once more.

The wretched man is incurable, and suffers an agony like that of the worm that dies. He has been in this asylum seven years, and his name is Walter Mandeville!

## DOCTOR'S SHIFT

### Now Gets Along Without It.

A physician says: "Until last fall I use to eat meat for my breakfast and suffered with indigestion until the meat had passed from the stomach.

"Last fall I began the use of Grape-Nuts for breakfast and very soon found I could do without meat, for my body got all the nourishment necessary from the Grape-Nuts and since then I have not had any indigestion and am feeling better and have increased in weight.

"Since finding the benefit I derived from Grape-Nuts I have prescribed the food for all of my patients suffering from indigestion or over-feeding and also for those recovering from disease where I want a food easy to take and certain to digest and which will not overtax the stomach.

"I always find the results I look for when I prescribe Grape-Nuts. For ethical reasons please omit my name." Name given by mail by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

The reason for the wonderful amount of nutriment, and the easy digestion of Grape-Nuts is not hard to find.

In the first place, the starchy part of the wheat and barley goes through various processes of cooking, to perfectly change the starch in Dextrose or Post Sugar, in which state it is ready to be easily absorbed by the blood. The parts in the wheat and barley which Nature can make use of for rebuilding brain and nerve centres are retained in this remarkable food, and thus the human body is supplied with the powerful strength producers so easily noticed after one has eaten Grape-Nuts each day for a week or 10 days. "There's a reason."

Get the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

### Far From Blind

He—And so young Northam is engaged to that plain Miss Addison.

She—Yes, but love is blind, you know.

He—Well, I don't know, for he must have seen twice as much in her as I did.

### "Be pleasant every morning until 10 o'clock, the rest of the day will take care of itself."

This is one of the best little sermons we know. Have you ever stopped to think that the morning is the time when your temper is usually ruffled, and have you ever stopped to think that the cause of bad temper in the morning is nearly always because your stomach has not been working properly during the night?

Our grand sires required no admonition to "Be pleasant every morning until ten o'clock; the rest of the day will take care of itself," for they digested their food and woke up full of life and energy ready for the day's duties, and this was because they lived on simple foods instead of highly seasoned palatable concoctions, which contain no nourishment. Nature gave us milk, wheat and eggs, and on these foods a person can live indefinitely, but if the milk is skimmed, and if the outside of the wheat is taken off the kernel, and if the lime, the salt, and the iron, are all removed, you have simply starch alone; the starch goes into the stomach and becomes sugar.

Do you know that a person would starve to death on plain white bread and water? Do you know that he could live indefinitely on whole wheat bread or on whole wheat food and water? These interesting facts are all set forth in a book called "Back to Nature" which tells about proper living and gives recipes for meals of the simple kind—the kind that makes you strong and well; the kind that makes you "Pleasant every morning until ten o'clock." This book is published at a great expense, but it is given free to every reader of this paper. It is an advertisement of "EGG-O-SEE" the great food—which is made from whole wheat, which is baked and predigested and is all ready to serve from the package you buy at your grocer's. You get more life and energy from a 10 cent package of EGG-O-SEE than you will get from a thousand dollars' worth of white bread. This is no idle claim. It is a scientific fact. We want to tell you about this simple food question, so write us and say "Please send me a copy of your book 'Back to Nature'" and the book will be sent you at once without charge. Address EGG-O-SEE CO., 13 Main St., Quincy, Ill.

### Not So Foolish

"I can't understand why men drink whisky," she said. "Does it quench thirst?"

"Of course not," he replied. "If it did they wouldn't be foolish enough to drink it."

## Ladies, Preserve Your Youthful Appearance.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results.

Send ten (10) cents for formula which w
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...BY...
MAJOR ALBION F.
GRANT

# THE DEUCE OF DIAMONDS;

## ...OR... THE VAN ARDEN MYSTERY.

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### CHAPTER IX.
### A STREAK OF LUCK.

The detective's unexpected visit to Mr. Cephas Bloom was the result of a streak of luck which now and then falls to a trailer of men.

Hollis had happened to see the carriage which daily, brought the banker to his dawn-town office, draw to a curb and the door open. In another moment a young man stepped out and said a few parting words to Bloom.

Now, Hollis had received from Jocelyn Gray a close description of the stranger who had accosted her on the street to ask her if her late employer had received a letter from Cairo. Jocelyn had taken close notice of this insistent individual and had carried his image in her mind ever since, so that she was enabled to describe him closely to the detective.

The make-up of the person who alighted from the banker's carriage tallied so closely with Jocelyn's description that, before the person had gone half a dozen steps, he had a ferret at his heels.

The longer Hollis tracked him the firmer he became in the belief that, not only was he the man Jocelyn had seen, but the same person who had dropped from the tree before her lodgings.

The quarry did not lead the detective a very long chase. He sought out a restaurant and dived through the door, seating himself at one of the tables.

Hollis took a place at another table from which he closely studied the man all the time, feeling more and more certain that he was not mistaken.

The young man was handsome and wore a darkish mustache peculiarly curled just as Jocelyn had mentioned in her description. He ate slowly, as though in no hurry, and, as Hollis noticed, had ordered the most expensive dishes on the menu.

Between bites he read a newspaper which lay on the table, looking it over carefully as if hunting for a particular item. At last he paid his score, liberally tipping the waiter, and prepared to depart.

As he passed through the door, Hollis followed and found his party on the sidewalk.

After a short run the quarry entered a well-known hotel and proceeded at once to the elevator.

Not wishing to enter after him for fear that he might be recognized by the hunted man, Hollis held aloof till the lift came down again.

Then he stepped into the elevator and said to the boy:

"You have just carried my friend up, I see."

The little fellow looked at Howell and smiled:

"Mr. Hyde, you mean?"

"Not Mr. Jekyll, I guess," smiled the detective. "I want to see him. He is now in room—let me see——"

"433, sixth floor."

"That's it, boy. We'll go up," and in another moment Hollis was being carried skyward in the elevator.

At the sixth floor he alighted and with a glance at the nearest door pushed down the corridor.

When he came to room 433 he stopped and listened a moment, then knocked lightly.

Before he could receive a response from within he turned the knob, threw the door open and strode forward.

There was a light cry and a man sprang up from a table, crushing a lot of bank-notes in his hand. His face turned two colors in an instant and he stood in the middle of the room, staring at the detective like one suddenly run to earth.

Hollis had shut the door behind him.

"I hope I haven't disturbed you, Mr. Hyde," said he, coming forward with his keen gaze fastened on the man at the table. "We may have met before, but under these circumstances."

"You are a stranger to me," said the other, speaking for the first time in sharp, ringing tones. "You must excuse me if I have forgotten you——"

"I am Howell Hollis, possibly unknown to you, but we'll let that pass."

"As you say, sir, but your visit must admit of, if not demand, an explanation."

"Which I sahll be happy to give."

"Proceed, then."

"I am in a position to answer a little question of yours put a few days ago to a young lady on the street."

"Indeed? I am unaware of asking any questions of a young lady on the street."

"Let me refresh your memory, then. Our memories are often treacherous. You wished to know if the late Anson Van Arden received a letter from Cairo preceding his death."

Again the handsome face before the detective changed color.

He seemed to be measuring Hollis from head to foot and the hand that still gripped the bank-notes closed tighter than ever.

"What if I did, sir? What is that to you?" he cried.

"Much, perhaps, maybe little."

"Little, no doubt. I say, sir, you are not a gentleman whatever your calling, to break in upon me in this way. I trust you will consider the interview at an end."

"When I have ended it, Mr. Hyde, not before," was the reply. "Mr. Bloom has been liberal this morning," and Hollis glanced at the hand with the bank-notes.

"Bloom, did you say?"

"Yes, Bloom, the banker, late the partner of Van Arden. You can do one of two things, Mr. Hyde, tell me what makes you a companion of the magnate or——"

Hollis paused purposely in order to let the young man put in a question.

"Or what, sir?"

"Go with me!" grimly answered the detective.

For a moment there was silence between the two men and then, with a curse, the young man threw the crumpled notes upon the table.

"Darn it all!" cried he. "She put you on my track, did she?"

"Never mind that. I am here, Mr. Hyde. The best way to get rid of me is the easiest way. You are an expert in dropping out of trees after dark. Come, let us fairly understand one another. What if Cephas Bloom has given you away?"

It was a thrust made at random, but the shaft went home.

"Cephas Bloom? That rascal betray me?" almost hissed Hyde. "Why, I can break his neck. I say—curse it all!—Betray me! In the name of God, has the man no horor?"

"Not much, I'm afraid," said Hollis.

Hyde's eyes dropped to the bank-notes and, suddenly catching them up, he tore them in two, flinging the pieces about the room in his ungovernable rage.

"I'll make it as hot as perdition for Cephas Bloom!" he exclaimed. "Betrayed by that villain? I say, you're a detective, eh?"

"Yes."

"Then—Mr. Hollis, I believe you call yourself—go out and ask Cephas Bloom what became of the key to Van Arden's door."

And this is how Hollis came to put his question to the banker.

### CHAPTER X.
### MISS ENID.

"I may have played the dunce. It was a bold play and it may put the enemy on the qui vive. I wonder what Tibbals will say if he hears of it? It was a bold play with Hyde and I took that rascal at his word and put the question to Bloom and got repulsed for it—in fact, got nothing for my pains. Well," and the young ferret laughed to himself, "a man must enact the role of fool several times in his career and I've played it more than once."

Hollis was seated within the walls of his litle apartment and some hours had passed since his interview with Cephas Bloom. He had called at the Van Arden mansion and had been shown to the room of the tragedy already visited by him. Mrs. Van was suffering with a nervous headache and Enid had shown him up.

The beautiful girl had recovered her self-possession since the crime and some of the old roses had come back to her cheeks.

"I would like to take a look at the key that was in the lock when Mr. Van Arden was discovered dead in this chamber," said Hollis.

Enid gave a little start.

"We cannot accomodate you, Mr. Hollis," was the reply. "The key has mysteriously disappeared."

"Taken by a relic hunter, do you suppose?"

"I do not see what a person would want with such a gruesome souvenir. It has vanished just the same."

"When did you miss it first?"

"Yesterday morning. Norah, the servant, first reported the loss. I have kept it from mamma. She has quite enough to bear as it is and I would not for the whole world add to her burden of sorrow."

"Is anything else missing?" queried Hollis.

"I investigated after Norah's report," answered the girl, "and discovered that some person has abstracted some papers which I am sure were in the desk over yonder, when papa was—killed."

"Papers of importance, think you?"

"Business papers. At times I assisted him at home, going over his papers with him after business hours, and some of the papers which I know were in the desk are gone."

"Might he not have put them away since then?"

"Hardly. He told me at our last meeting in this room that those papers were not to be disturbed on any account."

"What was their nature, if I may ask?"

"They were accounts, unsettled ones, between him and Mr. Bloom, not that there was any dispute over them, for papa assured me there was nothing of the kind, but he desired that the accounts should remain here and not be disturbed."

"And they are gone, you say?"

"Gone with the door key."

It was a cloudy day, but for all that a good deal of light flooded the room.

"Miss Van Arden," said Hollis, looking intently at the fair and wondering face that confronted him, "have you any opinion as to the crime of this house?"

The form before him seemed to suddenly become rigid and the gril's face paled.

"I mean, Miss Van Arden, have you thought of some one who might have committed this crime—some one who would profit by it?"

"Oh, as to profiting by papa's taking off," cried Miss Enid, "there are several who might do that. There are mother and myself, the servants, for he left them all little legacies, and possibly some of his business associates."

"Mr. Bloom, for instance?"

"I did not particularly mention him, did I?"

"You did not, but he is a member of the firm."

"Yes. Mr. Bloom would profit in a measure for would he not become the head of the establishment? But I am not saying anything against him, understand."

"Of course not," smiled Hollis, in a matter-of-fact manner. "Mr. Bloom was the junior partner of the firm of Van Arden & Bloom and is, I am told, one of the best financiers in the city."

"He has that reputation."

"And his family——"

"I thought you knew he has none," put in Enid, with a little flush. "Mr. Bloom is a widower of some years standing. He has one child, a son, but I am told that the young man has not been heard of for years. He had a penchant for traveling, went off to foreign lands and that is the last his father has heard of him. Nixon Bloom, I believe was his full name."

Hollis did not pursue this particular branch of the subject further, but walked over to one of the windows and pulled aside the heavy drapery.

"Will you come over here, Miss Van Arden?" he said, glancing at the girl who came forward.

"You many not be aware, perhaps, that a singular clew was found in this room?"

"A clew—Mr. Hollis? In this room?"

"Yes—as strange a clew as ever was found upon the scene of a crime."

"I cannot imagine what it can be. You did not find a dagger, did you?"

"No. We will probably find that later."

By this time Hollis had drawn from his pocket the half of the deuce of diamonds which he held toward Enid Van Arden.

She fell back a step, but almost instantly advanced and held out her hand for it.

"Why, it's but a bit of card—the deuce of diamonds torn across!" she exclaimed.

"It is nothing less. Your father played at times, did he not?"

"Oh, yes. We frequently played together, right in this room," exclaimed the fair creature. "Ah! let me see the bit of pasteboard."

Hollis relinquished it to her care and saw her lean toward the window while she studied it closely.

"Father always played with a certain pack—that is he used one design."

"Never used any other?"

"Never."

"And has that card those designs on the back?"

"It has not. Father never played a card like this one."

Miss Van Arden spoke with an earnestness that carried conviction with every word.

"I never saw a card with such a back in this house," she went on, lifting her eyes at last to the detective's face. "And you say you found it in this chamber?"

"Yes."

"When, Mr. Hollis?"

"A few hours after the crime."

"It mystifies me unless the villain must have left it behind him."

"You are a good discerner, Miss Van Arden. Indeed, you would make a good detective."

"But, like some of your class, I would make mistakes at times."

"None of us are infallible. So you have never seen a card of this sort of back before?"

"Never, sir."

"None of your visitors who came to play of evenings never used such cards?"

"I do not remember it. Let me see it again," and she took the half card from Hollis' hand.

"Now that I notice it closely, I believe one of our guests last year brought with her a pack of this design."

"Last year and a lady, Miss Van Arden?"

"Yes, but of course it is merely a coincidence. It can be nothing more and my memory may be at fault. I am almost sure the cards I refer to were of this peculiar design, but it is not worth the thought. It may have been accident on the part of Mrs. Bodley-Grant."

Hollis started a little and took back the card from the girl's white hand.

"Oh, Mrs. Bodley-Grant is the woman who travels much, is she not?" he queried.

"Yes. We call her the Female Stanley. She is a wonderful person, has seen the whole world with the exception of Mexico. She has won and lost at Monaco, ridden over the pampas and flirted with almost every reigning monarch in Europe. One of the most daring and interesting women in the world."

"An old friend of mine, by the way," said Hollis, when he could get in a word.

"Of yours? Why, how strange! I did not know you were so much as acquainted. Is this all you have to show me, Mr. Hollis?"

"All, Miss Van Arden. You——"

Hollis paused and threw a quick glance toward the door. He had caught the patter of feet in the corridor beyond

"Norah, perhaps," said Enid, interpreting his look. "She never listens, Mr. Hollis. There, the footsteps are gone and Norah heard nothing."

"We will go, then. You will please keep the secret of the deuce of diamonds awhile longer."

"Then, you think——"

"It may amount to nothing, but it was found in this room. Whether it was left by the Crosada——"

Hollis was interrupted by a startling look from the deep orbs of Enid Van Arden.

"The Crosada, did you say? How strange! Do you know, Mr. Hollis, that papa once gave me instructions to cut from the magazines and newspapers every allusion I found to that word or name?"

"Did he? And you did so?"

"Yes; there's a pigeon-hole in the desk now, full of the clippings. I remembered the name the moment you mentioned it. It's a death order, I know. We'll go down now."

Enid opened the door and Hollis followed. When he reached the top of the stair he saw a garment swish out of sight in the hall below.

"Mrs. Van Arden!" said the detective to himself.

### CHAPTER XI.
### TIBBALS THROWS A BOMBSHELL.

Howell Hollis, the young sleuth of the great city, was in a deep dilemma.

Whither was the strange trail leading? Was it to end at the feet of Irene Bodley-Grant, in Bloom's office or——

Hollis dared not think.

He had known Mrs. Bodley-Grant for years, had more than a passing friendship for the fascinating widow and at times could have thrown himself at her feet and told her how he worshipped her. But he knew the social miles that separated them, she a widow with a million at her command, while he was but a trailer of men, and unraveller of that which is dark in crime, one beneath her, as he knew, in social position, for she had entree where he would not be permitted to intrude.

Then there was another, whose fair face had more than a passing thought for him, in fact, there were two faces, one in the house of the aveune mystery and the other in Jocelyn Gray's lodgings.

He remembered Tibbals' observation that, after all, he might find a woman in the case, but then Tibbals was always against the fair sex; he was virtually a woman-hater, having,, as Hollis had often thought, been crossed in love which had driven him from Eden and forced him, through perversity, into a life of single blessedness.

No, he could not always trust Tibbals' observations.

He was willing to admit, not to Tibbals, of course, that he had blundered in the play he had made in Cephas Bloom's office.

Why hadn't he cooled off a little before he went thither after his interview with Dorsey Hyde? But "the spell" as he called it, was upon him and a momentary desire to strike while the iron was hot had impelled him.

But he could not get rid of Enid Van Arden's observations.

If Irene Bodley-Grant had produced a deck of playing cards of the design of the one found in the room of mystery—and he had found, as the reader knows, one half of a deuce of daimonds in the globe-trotter's parlor—then the finger of suspicion pointed to her

Yet, Hollis dared not think of this.

For hours after his visit to Bloom, which had been preceded by his confronting of Hyde, he conned the situation with the mien of a half-crazed man.

Why not go and put the whole thing before Tibbals?

He had gone to the old detective before and had received light in some very dark subjects and this seemed the only course left him now.

So at last he posted off in direction of Tibbals' abode.

He found the old ferret alone in his little room, playing with a one-eyed cat which he had installed there in place of a wife.

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"Ho!" exclaimed Tibbals, the moment he caught sight of Hollis. "I haven't caught sight of you for an age. You're still on that Van Arden crime?"

Hollis nodded and took a seat as he rearranged the subject matter of his call in his head.

"I'm a little flurried, Tibbals," said he.

"Eh? You find the mystery perplexing, I guess."

"It's enough to set one crazy."

"Not such a clear headed-fellow as you, Howell. Come, you don't want to get rattled at this stage of the game."

"Hang it all, I can't say that I'm very far from being in that undesirable state."

"What's the matter?"

Tibbals put the cat down and pushed her across the room.

Then Hollis proceeded and succinctly narrated all that had happened since they had met.

Tibbals listened, not like one who is deeply interested, but with the air of a person who is otherwise preoccupied.

Hollis had told him stories of the trail before and knew his strange moods.

"Is that all?" asked Tibbals, when the younger detective had finished.

"Great heavens! isn't that enough?"

"It's a good deal, I'll admit. Quite enough to give you the blues. By the way, how far have you got along with Mrs. Bodley-Grant?"

Hollis flushed deeply and coughed a little.

"We are friends—that's all."

"And she's a deucedly fascinating creature—one of Eve's daughters born out of Eden."

"You're a little severe on the sex, Tibbals."

"They're all alike, that is all I've ever seen. Hang it all, Howell, I prefer the cat yonder."

Hollis, despite his interest in the case, broke out into a laugh which did not in the least disturb Tibbals' equanimity.

"Well, what do you think?" he asked.

"In the first place, you blundered when you put that question to Bloom."

"Granted."

"He told you to ask the person who knew, didn't he?"

"Yes."

"Then you went to the house of the crime and got something out of the girl?"

"Yes, out of Miss Enid."

"And she, after some thought, suddenly remembered that Mrs. Bodley-Grant once produced in the house a pack of cards with the peculiar design on the backs."

"That is what she said."

"And you've found in Irene's parlor a torn card of that same design?"

Hollis nodded, though it cost him an effort.

"It's queer," smiled Tibbals. "Now, you see, if Bloom knows where that key is, you've put him on his guard."

"That's what I've done."

"I think I know what you want with that key, Howell. One can open and lock a door, being on the oustide himself, with the key within, if he has the proper tools."

"That's it exactly. And the key will show marks of the appliances."

"Right you are, boy. That key is the mute evidence of guilt."

"I can see it in no other way."

For a moment Tibbals looked across the room as if he were studying the window, then he slowly turned upon Hollis again.

"There's the fatal design of the card," he said. "I think I told you once, boy, that there might be a woman in this case."

"But not Irene, Tibbals—not Mrs. Bodley-Grant?"

"There it is again. One must be on pretty familiar terms with a millionairess when he calls her by her front name."

"I've told you that we've been friends for some time," said Hollis, with some asperity. "She calls me Howell."

"Huh!" snorted old Tibbals. "She's a most desirable catch I should say, financially speaking. Would pay for a wedding trip round the world and so forth. But there's the sign of the Crosada found by yourself in her apartments."

Hollis was silent. He did not care to commit himself further.

"Now," suddenly resumed Tibbals, "I don't know whether you've come to me for advice or not."

"I'll take any you've got on tap."

"Eh? Well, my boy, there's another person I think you've left out of your calculations."

"Another person?"

"Yes."

"Not Mrs. Van Arden?"

"No, not the widow, but you say you saw her at the foot of the stair after your inspection of the murder chamber with Miss Enid? It must have been her footsteps you heard in the corridor."

"I'm quite sure of it and her nervous headache, I am almost convinced, was a sham."

"Hang the creatures anyhow," blurted the old woman-hater. "But Mrs. Van, as they call her, is not the person I think you've left out in your calculations."

"No?"

"There's another and she's a woman."

Hollis, in his eagerness, inclined forward and waited for Tibbals to proceed.

"You haven't thought of Miss Enid Van Arden?" said the old detective.

In an instant, Hollis was on his feet staring at the man on the chair like one half demented.

"Great heavens!" he cried. "Surely you don't——"

"I don't accuse any one," coolly said Tibbals. "I only mentioned a name."

### CHAPTER XII.

### WHITHER LEADS THIS TRAIL?

To say that Hollis was thunderstruck at the mention of Miss Enid's name would not convey to the reader the true state of his mind.

What, flashed across his brain, that young girl a murderer? He dared not hold the thought for an instant. He looked at the unpreturbed Tibbals and then around the room. His blood seemed to turn to ice in his veins.

It was some moments before he pulled his thoughts together. It was simply monstrous. The horror of the idea seared his brain, he even wondered if Tibbals were not losing his mind. What could have induced the mention of the girl's name in connection with that dark deed in the avenue mansion? Surely the old sleuth had passed into the dotage of life and his hatred of women was his master.

Tibbals did not speak again.

"In the name of God," suddenly cried Hollis, "what do you mean, man?"

Tibbals slowly elevated his face and for a moment looked searchingly at Hollis.

"I merely asked you something," said the old detective.

"But it can't be."

"Let us see. You questioned her about the strange design on the back of the card of the Crosada?"

"Yes."

"She at first said she had never seen it before?"

"She did."

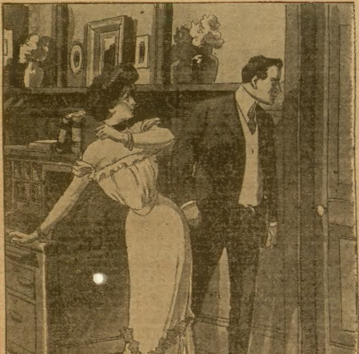
"Then afterward she informed you that she had seen such a pack in possession of Mrs. Bodley-Grant in that very house."

Hollis uttered a little cry. He saw what the old detective was driving at.

"Women are cunning things," pursued Tibbals. "They lead you away from what you want for a time and then suddenly do the unexpected which has been in their minds all the time. I've been a detective for years and I know the fair herd."

"But this fair girl——"

"Oh, as to that sort of flattery," broke in Tibbals, "it's all bosh. Who killed old Marchant, four years ago? As modest looking a chit as ever breathed. Who murdered Mrs. Green-Morton in her apartments on Torrey Hill? A girl who sang psalms half the day. I say, Hollis, I could cite twenty cases where I was thunderstruck to find the trail end at the feet of a pretty houri. Messaline, Cleopatra, Brinvilliers were all angels in looks and demeanor at times, but——"



"Norah, perhaps!" said Enid.

Hollis held up his hand, for the old detective to desist in his caustic cataloging of the opposite sex.

"Now you can take my suggestion as you please," Tibbals resumed. "I'm looking at things as they are presented to me and not through other peoples' spectacles. I can't help it, Howell. But certain things about your interview with Miss Van Arden and my own experiences lead me in a certain direction."

"Awhile ago you were leading me toward my friend, Irene."

"Was I?"

"Now you've shifted off on one just as fair and, I believe, as innocent."

"I'm glad you think so, boy, but you may have your dreams rudely broken."

"Suppose that Mrs. Bodley-Grant had a deck of cards of the strange design and that the only one missing is the deuce of diamonds, what then?"

"That is supposition."

"Of course. Do you think Miss Van Arden would try to enmesh Irene in the meshes of guilt?"

"I say women are strange creatures. Some I have known are perfectly soulless."

Hollis drew off and picked up his hat.

"Now don't take offense, boy," said Tibbals with a kindly look on his face. "I wouldn't break one of your dreams for the world. If you think that I have struck the right key-note throw up the case."

"Never! I am going to the end of this mystery no matter who is involved."

"Beauty or gold, eh?"

"That is right, beauty or gold, as you say."

In another minute Tibbals was alone in his little room.

"I like him," murmured the old detective, speaking aloud. "If I had a son I would like for it to be him. But I know these butterflies called women. I have seen the fairest of them in the meshes of guilt and they were as guilty as Messalina."

Messalina, being a woman to whom Tibbals always referred, he had drawn every other woman over her likeness.

Meanwhile, Hollis was on the street below.

The shades of evening had fallen and the young detective pushed with drooped head through the crowds, looking not in any direction as he forged along.

The words of Tibbals had started a new train of thought. Cruel as they were he believed that the old man felt that he had spoken from truthful deduction.

But he could not think that either Irene or Enid was guilty of murder.

They came before him as he hurried away, the one with her dark eyes, and the other with her blue.

One was up in the ways of the world for she had traveled its beaten and unbeaten paths, the other was as far from the sins of that world as the tropics are from the poles.

Poor Tibbals! His hatred of the sex had mastered him. And yet, as Hollis thought, there came before him the torn card picked up in Irene's parlor, and Enid's information.

To say the least, he was staggered.

He was prompted to cry out in the agony of his soul.

But he did not forget his last words to Tibbals, that he would follow the trail to the end, no matter whom it involved.

Being hungry, Hollis sought a restaurant which he knew was not far off and entered.

He wanted to be alone to eat and to think and for this reason he asked for a box where he could pull a curtain between him and prying eyes and eat in peace.

He threw himself into a chair and waited for his order.

A rather thin, varnished partition shut him off from the box just beyond him.

Suddenly he became aware of the hum of voices in the box on the other side of the partition.

Hollis leaned forward a little for one of the voices sounded strangely familiar.

Just then the waiter came with his order and delivered it, withdrawing a moment later.

"You've got to see to it," Hollis heard through the planks. "I depend on you remember."

"I'll do it."

"Good! You looked him over, eh?"

"Yes and I owe him one for his insolence. He's as strong as a lion, sir——"

"But you've known how 'tis done."

There was a movement of feet in the opposite box.

"Finish your meal. I've got to go. Remember!"

Some one passed the curtain before Hollis could draw it aside for a glimpse and he knew that the other person still remained in the box beyond.

Then he fell to and ate rapidly, but at the same time listening for sounds that would tell him of the departure of the second person.

For some little time, Hollis heard sounds of kinfe and fork on the other side of the partition and then they suddenly ceased.

"He's got me, that's a face," said a voice over there. "And I on the other hand am not entirely unarmed. When a fellow feathers his nest it stands him in hand to keep the feathers coming in all the time."

These words were followed by a little chuckle, then a chair was pushed backward and the unseen man rose to his feet.

Hollis leaned slightly forward and parted the curtain of his box a trifle. Some one flitted by.

The detective caught sight of this person for the briefest moment imaginable. As he dropped the curtains he smiled to himself, but said nothing.

The man who had quitted the box was Posen Blay, head bookkeeper for Cephas Bloom, banker and millionaire!

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## Wore a Curl Paper.

It was just a little curl paper in the maiden's hair. It was not made of a stocking or a white rag or a pink ribbon or even a black hair ribbon or tissue paper.

It was just a bit of plain, crinky wrapping paper. It enfolded the trees of the maiden in its stiff sides, and a shining white pin held it securely. The lady did not know it was there. O, no. She sat complacent and self-satisfied in the orchestra circle and gazed wistfully at the entrancing love scenes of "Mizpah."

She was dressed up fine in her Sunday clothes. Her white-gloved hands were folded benignly over her blue silk skirt, and there was a dainty piece of white lace at her throat.

But the curl paper was there, too, shining out among her black hair. It was just over her left temple. She had evidently intended to leave it until the last minute. The curl then imprisoned was to be the crowning charm of her toilet. Over her forehead it would wave its graceful length. Indeed, she had put on her hat and then her waist and then her skirt and even her coat, so the fetching little lock should be just in the proper state of curl to make her irrestible.

She had not come alone to the theater. Her companion was a man, young and handsome. He wore glasses, and was either too near-sighted or too polite to see it. Her curl paper side was turned to him, but she was blissfully unconscious of anything wrong in her attractive appearance.

And where ignorance is bliss it is sometimes folly to be otherwise.

Her awakening was bound to come when, after four long acts, the ride home and the two-minute talk at the door, she glanced at herself in the glass and saw what had been on her hair all evening—the curl paper.

## In the Book Store.

Mr. Schwartz had just taken possession of the little book shop which he had purchased with the idea that here would be an ideal occupation for him, permitting him to sit around and smoke his long pipe all the time. His first patron—or would-be patron—on the first morning of his advent as a book dealer was a young woman who wanted to get a book dealing with Arctic romance.

"Good morning," she said, "have you got 'Frozen Dog Tales?'"

"Vat Lady, diss is not a Chinese restaurant."

"But you don't understand me. I mean——"

"I neffer heard of frozen dog tails, yet. Mepe bey are someding dose Fillingpeeno beebles eats. But nod here, lady, nod here. Diss is a book store."

"Well, probably you do not understand me. I wanted to get some book that had stories of the north in it. Perhaps you have 'Pardners?'"

No, ma'am. Dare iss nobody in dis store but myselluf. Schmidt vanted to take half, but I wouldn't let him in on it, unt—"

But the young woman was hurrying out.

## Pointed Paragraphs.

A dead man is soon forgotten—unless his widow marries again.

Some men would be more likely to take hints if they could pawn them.

Too many people are interested in business that is none of their business.

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The love letter of an egotist—"I."

A man isn't beaten as long as he isn't discouraged.

Law rules the world, but love is a law unto itself.

Some men fail to make a hit because they aim too high.

A man may be a good sculptor and still not cut any ice.

He who honestly criticises his own actions has a steady job.

Most people would rather be miserably rich than happily poor.

Too many drawing-room smiles deteriorate into kitchen frowns.

Many a husband would lose his job if his wife was a mind reader.

Only those who marry for money can afford to repent at leisure.

Wise men never borrow trouble as long as they can borrow money.

There is hope for any man as long as his dog doesn't cut his acquaintance.

Some things cannot be explained, they simply are, and that settles it.

It's time to cross your fingers when you hear a man boasting of his good deeds.

If a woman can't break some man's heart she gets reckless and breaks her own.

People who agree to everything you say are almost as entertaining as a phonograph.

The easier a man makes his money the easier it is for other people to separate him from it.

Fortunate is the woman who can travel down life's highway at the expense of a husband.

Only those who seldom attend church register a protest when the minister desires a vacation.

It must be dawning on several trusts about this time that even the consumer may turn when trodden upon hard and long.

What a man and his wife say to their guests and what they say about them after their departure are different, quite different.

A man who speaks from experience says that it costs almost as much to keep a wife in clothing as it does to keep an automobile in repair.

Another important feature of the session which should not be allowed to pass without notice is the defeat of the senate's effort to snub La Follette.

Men think they can fool some women all of the time and all women some of the time, but as a matter of fact, they can't fool any of the women any of the time.

# LATTIMER'S STRANGE CASE.

By WILLIAM WALLACE COOK.

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## CHAPTER VII.

## HEROIC TREATMENT.

Lattimer wandered back to earth out of a tangle of dreams. They were not pleasant dreams, but filled with shapeless monsters that could have had no existence outside an imagination such as his.

He opened his eyes with the old craving tormenting him beyond endurance. "Give me a cigarette," he pleaded, his eyes on the face bending over him.

"We haven't any cigarettes, Lattimer," a voice answered.

"In—in my satchel," he returned, essaying to rise on his elbow but collapsing backward at full length.

"Your satchel was lost," continued the voice.

"Lost?" echoed Lattimer, weakly.

"Yes; it was hitched to the saddle horn, and when your horse took to the water the satchel got off and was lost. How do you feel?"

Lattimer's reply was a quivering moan.

"Go to sleep," murmured the voice persuasively.

"Can't—till I smoke."

"You're not to do any more smoking. Doctor's orders. There isn't anything to smoke around here, anyhow."

Lattimer tried to hurl himself from the bed; and struggled with the strong arms that held him down until utterly spent. Presently he fell away in slumber.

The second time he came to himself he thought he was again dreaming. A yellow, parchment like face, with thick lips, high cheek bones and oblique eyes was bending over him.

"You no go topside light away, huh?" chattered a thin voice. The yellow face cracked across into something that was meant for an encouraging smile, and a hand with clawlike nails grasped Lattimer's wrist.

"Go 'way!" cried Lattimer, pushing to the farther side of the bed.

"It's all right, Lattimer," said another voice as a second face appeared beside the first. "This is Dr. Wo Chan, the best doctor this side of Denver."

"Give me a cigarette!" demanded Lattimer.

"You wantee smoke, huh?" asked Dr. Wo Chan, pulling a little case from inside his blouse. "Velly good; you smokee my kind cigalette."

The Chinaman removed a cigarette from the box Lattimer clutched at it eagerly. Pretty soon he was puffing the "paper pipe" but it gave him no enjoyment and he flung it from him in disgust.

"You no likee smoke med'cine," cackled the Chinaman, "you likee drinkee him. Velly good."

Wo Chan motioned toward the other present, whom Lattimer recognized as Bangham. A cup was brought and Lattimer was made to swallow a bitter liquid that well nigh gagged him.

"I want my own cigarettes, I tell you!" he raved, thrashing about on the bed. "Give them to me!"

He struggled so hard that it was necessary for both the doctor and the detective to hold him down. In a few moments the medicine had taken effect and he was quiet.

The third time he opened his eyes there was darkness around him. From somewhere in the gloom the low, regular breathing of a sleeper reached his ears.

Here was an opportunity to flee the house and secure that which his captors denied him. With a strength born of his raging desire, he got out of bed and groped about in an attempt to find the door.

A chair was knocked over. Instantly some one on the other side of the room could be heard bounding erect.

"Lattimer! What are you up to, Lattimer?"

By then Lattimer was at the door. Hurling it open he staggered out into the starlight.

A desolate hill rose in front of him with a cavernous valley stretching along its base. The house was perched on the edge of the valley.

Lattimer's observations extended no further, for he was pounced upon from behind, dragged back into the house and thrown on the bed.

"This is a free country, isn't it?" he demanded in an injured tone. "What right have you got to treat me like this?"

"That Chink and I are doing our best to make a man of you," answered Bangham. "You have done me a good turn and I'm going to do you one."

"What's the matter with me?"

"For one thing, you've had too much of that oh-be-joyful they do up in rice paper. That's the worst of it. As for the rest, the broncho walked on you and hurt you a considerable. Wo Chan says you're not to talk. Here's some medicine."

"I won't take it!" rebelled Lattimer.

"Oh, yes, you will. Be good about it, can't you? I hate to use force, but I'm ready to do anything that will help you out of this."

"Then go and drag the river. Get that satchel and let me have something to smoke that's worth while."

"You see me doing it, don't you?" There was a laugh back of the words and it still further aroused Lattimer's hostility. "Are you going to take this medicine?"

"I won't have any more of that Chinese dope!" flared Lattimer. "I know it's killing me, and you ought to have sense enough to——"

A strangling hand closed about Lattimer's throat. He squirmed and fought to free himself. Another moment and a cup was at his lips. In spite of all he could do he was compelled to gulp down the bitter draught.

The youth was in a rage; but in a little while sleep came and he was quiet once more. Bangham was whistling cheerily and getting breakfast on an oil stove, the next time Lattimer saw him.

Lattimer's surroundings stood out clearer before his mind. The room he was in comprised the whole interior of a small log cabin.

His bed was a rude bunk, built against one wall. Two or three two-foot sections of a log, set on end, were scattered about in lieu of chairs.

Bangham's oil stove had two burners. On one burner coffee was boiling in a disreputable looking tin can; on the other, several slices of bacon were frying in a skillet with a broken handle.

The table was two square feet of the earth floor in the vicinity of the stove. Pieces of bark served for plates, and there was a rusty tin dipper and a cracked china cup; sugar, salt and crackers were in evidence in bags as they had come from the grocery.

In the midst of his work, Bangham straightened suddenly. A shuffling step could be heard outside, as of some one approaching the door.

With a muttered exclamation, Bangham leaped to the wall and Lattimer saw a revolver flashing in his hand. Dr. Wo Chan appeared in the doorway, a bland smile on his face and his hands pushed into his wide sleeves.

The drawn weapon did not cause him the least concern. If anything, the suavity of his broad smile merely increased.

"Oh, it's you, is it, doc?" laughed Bangham, thrusting the revolver back into his pocket.

"Who you thinkee, huh?" returned the Chinaman, his almond eyes blinking shrewdly. "Mebby coyote?"

"I don't know what I thought. I've been troubled with nerves ever since I began taking care of Lattimer."

"How Lattimer come on?" queried the doctor, moving toward the bunk.

"I am feeling so well, doctor, that I think I could eat a pretty good meal," spoke up Lattimer.

"Velly fine," chuckled the Chinaman. "You eatee breakfus and me givee you cigalette."

"No more of your cigarettes for me, thanks," answered Lattimer with a shudder. "If you happen to have any of the other kind——"

"Can do!" broke in the celestial and drew a handful of the imported article from the depths of his blouse.

A cry escaped Lattimer and he reached eagerly for one of the white rolls.

"After you eatee bleakfus," said the doctor, and held the cigarettes behind him.

"Hurry up with the breakfast, Bangham," called Lattimer.

"Jupiter!" muttered Bangham. "You are acting more like a sane man, Lattimer, than at any time since I have known you."

Wo Chan's eyes snapped and sparkled as he sat near and watched Lattimer eat heartily of the food Bangham brought him. "Velly good, velly good," he kept saying, and now and then shot an expressive glance at Bangham.

"Now for one of the little comforters, doc," observed Lattimer, his breakfast finished.

The Chinaman handed him a cigarette and a match. Lattimer settled back for a period of enjoyment and began to smoke.

Somehow the "tang," the mysterious something which had heretofore made the "imported Turkish" so acceptable to him, was lacking. What was wrong?

He took the cigarette from his lips, gazed at it in surprise and then turned a suspicious glance upon the doctor. Wo Chan struck his yellow palms together delightedly.

"No likee, huh? You no likee cigalette alle samee like always?"

Lattimer cast the cigarette from him and lay back in the bunk, his eyes fixed upon vacancy. He was thinking; and, to his wonder, the mental exercise seemed to come easier to him than ever before.

Dr. Wo Chan got up and moved toward the door. Bangham followed.

"Med'cine do the tlick extla fine," whispered the Chinaman. "You savvy he no likee cigalette? He gettee well, now, like you and me."

Dr. Wo Chan took his departure. Lattimer was still absorbed in his reflections as Bangham went back to his own breakfast and ate it in silence. When he was through, Lattimer called to him.

"Come over here, Bangham. I want to have a little talk with you and this is as good a time as any."

## CHAPTER VIII.

## REASON AND STRATEGEM.

There was a businesslike ring to Lattimer's voice that caused a shade of anxiety to cross Bangham's face. Nevertheless, the detective drew close to the bunk, seated himself and hooked up one knee between his hands.

"I don't believe you ought to do much talking just now, Lattimer," said he.

"I've got to," answered Lattimer briefly. "There are certain matters connected with my situation here that must be made clear to me."

"It is time you took some more of that medicine," demurred Bangham.

"That medicine is a narcotic, isn't it?"

"It sends you off to the land of Nod for a few hours, but it's exactly what your system needs."

"I am convinced that Dr. Wo Chan understands my case pretty thoroughly, and that his medicine is doing me a world of good. I'll take it—a little later."

Bangham drew the revolver from his pocket, unhinged it and extracted the cartridges from the cylinder. Then, securing a piece of cloth, he began cleaning the weapon.

"Go on with your talk, Lattimer, if you're bound to," said he.

"In the first place," observed Lattimer, "where are we?"

"In an abandoned cabin, half a mile from the trail leading to the Ordway Ranch."

"We have been here about two days?"

"About two weeks, Lattimer."

Lattimer started. "Two weeks!" he echoed.

"You were out of your head most of the time," explained Bangham.

"You brought me here, got Dr. Wo Chan, and have stood by me for all that time?"

"I couldn't do any less, Lattimer," was the deprecating response. "If you hadn't saved my life, this bunch of trouble might have been postponed."

"In other words, my system was ripe for the illness I have passed through. Those things"—he waved a hand toward the cigarettes left by the doctor—"had me by the throat, and were merely waiting to send me to an asylum, or to the grave. The mishap on the trail simply precipitated matters."

"That's about the size of it. You went the limit with those Turkish things and snapped your endurance."

"And you allowed your business to go by default and tided me over two of the most critical weeks of my life."

"I couldn't very well desert you," said Bangham.

"No; but you could have carried me back to Fowler, put me under a physician's care and telegraphed Benson & Kendrick. Why didn't you do that? It would have been easier and better, all around."

"I have already told you my business," replied Bangham, flashing an uneasy look into the searching eyes levelled on his face. "It is necessary for me to do things you can't understand."

"What have I got to do with your business?" persisted Lattimer.

"As the messenger of Benson & Kendrick you are indirectly concerned. We must both of us lay low and keep from stirring things up."

Here was a different Lattimer from the one Bangham had known before. He was out with a probe and was liable to become troublesome.

"Why a telegram should not have been sent to the conductor of the train saying the man riding on MacLennon's pass was not MacLennon, or why you spirited me away from the hotel in Fowler, or why you brought me to this abandoned cabin, are a few of the items I can't quite comprehend. But we'll pass on to something else. What about that packet?"

"It's all right——"

"You have it?" queried Lattimer excitedly.

"Well, not exactly. But Skelton has it, and it is only a matter of a few hours, now, until we get hold of it. Two telegrams and a letter were received for you, in Fowler; the telegrams arrived a week ago, and the letter day before yesterday. I took the liberty of opening the telegrams—and of answering one of them."

Bangham laid aside the revolver and went to his coat, which was hanging from a nail in the log wall. Taking the telegrams and the letter from one of the pockets, he brought them to Lattimer.

The first message was from Patterson. "Got the packet O. K. Have just delivered it to James Skelton."

The other was from Kendrick. "No word from you. Anything wrong? Wire answer quick."

"Which telegram did you answer, Bangham?" asked Lattimer.

"The one from Kendrick," replied Bangham. "Told him everything was all right but that you had been hurt and would be laid up for a month. Signed your name to it."

"That was all right." Lattimer opened his letter and, from the other side of the room, Bangham watched his face narrowly as he read it.

"Can't understand what has become of you. Bangham wired yesterday you hadn't shown up—and this in the face of your telegram saying everything was all right.

I did not tell you before you started out, but it may be just as well for you to know now, that Peter Bangham is looking for a man named James Kent, who forged a note for $500 and fled West under an assumed name. An uncle of Kent's has died, since he fled, leaving him a fortune of $50,000.

The James Kent, Bangham is after, may, or may not, be the one who inherits the money. The letter intrusted to you contained a photograph of the heir, a certified check for $2,000 payable to him, and certain instructions from the deceased uncle.

If everything is not all right, I hope you won't hesitate to make it known to me at once. How were you injured? Write me at length and tell me all about it."

Lattimer read the letter twice, then struck a match to it, allowed it to burn to his fingers and dropped the charred fragments on the floor. 'Bangham wired yesterday you hadn't shown up"—of all the disclosures of that letter these were the most astonishing.

Why had Bangham wired that when, several days before, he had wired a statement to the contrary?

"I am going down to the spring after some water," said Bangham, coming toward the bunk with Lattimer's medicine. "You'd better take this now, hadn't you?"

"All right." Lattimer took the cup in his hand and held it until Bangham left the cabin with a pail. Then he emptied the cup back of the bunk and set it on the floor.

Presently he heard approaching steps. The spring was some distance away and he knew Bangham had not had time to go to it and return.

Reaching from the bunk he picked up the revolver Bangham had neglected to put back into his pocket, hid it under the blanket and composed himself in apparent slumber. Through his half closed eyes he saw a large man appear in the doorway—a man with shifty blue eyes and a sandy moustache.

The newcomer gazed searchingly about and crossed swiftly to the bunk. One look into Lattimer's face caused him to draw back in consternation.

For a brief space he stood undecided, then started for the door just as Bangham showed himself.

"Skelton!" exclaimed Bangham.

"Sh-h-h!" warned Skelton, darting a glance at Lattimer.

"Don't worry," said Bangham, his eyes on the empty cup near the head of Lattimer's bunk. "He's under the influence of a narcotic and will be deaf, dumb and blind to everything that goes on around him for several hours."

He set down the pail.

"I have been expecting you for more than a week," he continued. "You ought to have been here before."

## CHAPTER IX.

## AN EXCITING SITUATION.

Lattimer had resorted to a strategem. That clause in Kendrick's letter had aroused a suspicion of Bangham, and he wanted to observe what took place in the cabin while he was supposedly under the influence of Dr. Wo Chan's medicine.

It was a surprise to learn that the large gentleman who had stolen his pocketbook was none other than Bangham's friend, to whom Patterson had been requested to yield the packet. Lattimer felt that the policy he was pursuing was on the point of developing tangible results.

"You got the $2,000?" inquired Bangham, eagerly.

"I got a certified check calling for that amount," qualified Skelton.

"And cashed it?"

"Not yet. The check is made out in another's name."

"And you allow that to stand in the way!"

"While in this neck of the woods," explained Skelton. "I think we should take it on to San Francisco and cash it there."

"If you delay too long, Benson & Kendrick may grow suspicious and take steps to——"

Skelton tossed his hands.

"I'm an old hand at the game, and a beginner like you needn't try to give me pointers. I got your letter telling where you were, and was amazed. Why do you stay around here? It's dangerous."

"Lattimer saved my life and I couldn't abandon him. I know I am being followed—I saw the fellow who is after me, in Fowler, and only got away by a close margin. That was a fortnight ago."

"I have been looking for you in Denver."

"I couldn't leave Lattimer."

A sneer curled itself around the sandy moustache.

"By knuckling under to sentiment you are playing tag with your liberty,' remarked Skelton.

"I can't help that. Lattimer did me a good turn and I have reciprocated. He is getting well enough, now, so we can separate. But I've got to have money. The little you gave me is gone."

"Will you leave here at once? We'll cash in our chips at 'Frisco and work the races that are soon to be pulled off there. I intend to start a book, and you can help me."

"Leave Lattimer while he's——" Bangham paused and looked toward the bunk with perplexity in his face.

"It's the best time in the world to go. If you have any compunctions about leaving him to himself, you can send some one out here from town to look after him."

"I don't know but you're right, Skelton," said Bangham, after a few moment's thought. "How did you come out here?"

"In a buckboard. You can ride back with me. There's a train from Fowler at one o'clock. If you hurry we can catch it."

Bangham went over and got his coat.

"Come on," said he, briefly, starting for the door.

"That's the stuff!" exclaimed Skelton. "There are a whole lot of things I want you to tell me and we can talk on the road."

Bangham paused, his hands groping through his pockets.

"I have a revolver somewhere," said he, looking searchingly around the room. "I was cleaning it a little while ago."

"Never mind the gun," said Skelton, impatient of delay. "I'll give you one in place of it."

Bangham, however, continued to look, and Skelton, as the quickest way out of the difficulty, started in to help him.

"Here's your gun, Mr. Bangham," called a voice from the door.

Both men were at the farther end of the room, their backs to the door and to the bunk. Lattimer stood in the entrance, Bangham's revolver trained on Skelton.

"The devil!" shouted Skelton. "I thought you said he was doped!"

Bangham was astounded. There was an unwonted gleam in Lattimer's eyes, and it was perfectly evident to Skelton that he meant business.

"I have no desire to keep Mr. Bangham any longer," said Lattimer, "for he has cancelled the debt he was under to me. But you, Mr. Skelton, owe me something. After you make restitution, you and Bangham may leave here and go wherever you please."

"You are referring to that pocketbook you dropped on the train?" returned Skelton.

"More particularly to what was in the pocketbook—a hundred and fifty, if I remember right. Just count it out so I can see you and drop the roll in the bunk."

Skelton reached toward his hip.

"Are you in the habit of carrying money in your pistol pocket?" asked Lattimer blandly, his finger creeping toward the trigger of the weapon. "Look for it some other place. I'm in dead earnest, you know. I realize that I have been pretty easy, up to the present, but I shall make amends from this on."

Skelton cursed under his breath, and drew a roll of bills from the inside pocket of his vest.

"I have you to thank for this," he growled, glowering at Bangham.

He counted out seven twenties and a ten, holding each bill up for Lattimer to see and then dropping it into the bunk.

"Are you satisfied?" he asked, jabbing the rest of the roll into his vest.

"Not quite," answered Lattimer. "That packet intrusted to me by Mr. Kendrick was switched out of my possession at La Junta; you now have an opportunity to switch it back again. Throw it into the bunk with the money."

"I have no objections to your getting back the hundred and fifty, Lattimer," interjected Bangham, "but I draw the line at the rest of it. Will you be satisfied and allow us to leave?"

"I am very much disappointed in you, Bangham," remarked Lattimer, keeping his eyes and the revolver-point on Skelton. "I had no idea you would play me such a scurvy trick. That packet must be returned to me, and I shall ask Kendrick for further instructions as to its delivery."

"Dr. Wo Chan would be highly pleased if he could see you," said Bangham. "You are doing well, Lattimer, but have overlooked a very important point, and I am sorry to be compelled to call it to your atention."

He stooped and picked up something from off the floor.

"The cartridges that make that gun effective were not replaced. They are here," and Bangham held them up for Lattimer to see.

A husky laugh came from Skelton.

"We can't be so wise all the time as we are just some of the time," said he facetiously.

"Quite true," floated into the room from an unglazed opening that served for a window. "Keep away from the bunk, Skelton. It is very evident the money belongs to the young man in the door."

A smooth-faced man with a pair of snapping black eyes was leaning in at the opening. He had a six-shooter in each hand and covered Bangham and Skelton impartially.

A bomb of no small dimensions had been exploded.

"Who are you?" demanded Skelton.

"My real name is Peter Bangham," answered the man in the window, "although the pursuit of my calling often makes it necessary for me to use another—and I happen to be using another at this moment."

"Why," spoke up Lattimer, pointing to the young man who had stood by him during the preceding two weeks, "that man told me his name was Bangham!"

"I am not surprised," answered the detective. "That gentleman is James Kent, who forged a note of $500 and gave it to Skelton in payment of a pool-room debt. It isn't often that things fall out this way, but they do sometimes.

"Lattimer, kindly strip Mr. Skelton of his weapons and that packet. I want to join you, in there, but the window is small and, as things are, I don't feel like leaving to come around to the door."

Skelton offered no resistence. Lattimer found one revolver, and, when he had taken that Bangham vanished from the window and appeared in the entrance.

## CHAPTER X.

## MAINLY CONCERNING KENT.

"Now," said the detective, after bidding Lattimer keep the useless revolver and the one he had just taken from Skelton, "while remembering the somewhat complex relations we bear to each other, suppose we get as sociable as we can and see what we can make out of this.

"I'll sit down on one of these chopping blocks in the doorway, and you Lattimer, can make yourself comfortable next your money, there on the bunk. First, however, please hand me that packet of mine which Mr. Skelton has forgotten himself so far as to tamper with. Thank you."

The detective laid the long envelope on his knees.

"I am under obligations to you, Mr. Skelton," he went on. "I had been hanging around Fowler for two weeks—occasionally dodging out to the Ordway Ranch—looking for Kent, and morally sure, from all I could hear, that he was around somewhere. It remained for you to guide me to his retreat."

"Kent!" grunted Skelton. "I don't know who you're talking about. This young fellow is Pat Burton.'

"Of course! He was Pat Burton at Colorado Springs, at Trinidad, and out at Ordway's. For all I know to the contrary, he was also Burton when he got your message at Las Animas to board the train that brought you and Lattimer into Colorado.

"Nevertheless, he is Wright & Parcelle's Kent—the foolish young man who absconded from New York after uttering forged paper to the extent of $500, and left behind him a fortune of fifty thousand."

Burton lifted his head quickly.

"Fifty thousand, eh?" he remarked. "That's a large bait but I'm not biting at it."

"I'll admit it seems too good to be true. But you know about the rain, how it falls on just and unjust. The humorous part of it is that you were helping Skelton steal two thousand dollars that belonged to you." Bangham turned a look at Lattimer. "Keep that loaded revolver in readiness," said he, "while I give my attention to the contents of this envelope."

Laying his own weapons on his knees, he examined the check, the folded paper and the photograph, which formed the contents of the packet.

"There is not a shadow of a doubt," he muttered, his glance traveling back and forth between the photograph and Burton. 'From what little I could pick up in New York, I knew Kent was frequenting Skelton's pool-room; and when I set eyes on Skelton in Fowler, I was sure I was getting pretty warm.

"Look at that." He tossed the photograph to Burton. "No doubt you will recognize it."

Burton picked up the picture and the whiteness that flew suddenly into his face was evidence, in itself.

"Now listen," pursued Bangham, "while I read this line from your uncle, William Griggs:

"'It is my desire that my nephew, James Kent, be found; that a compromise of some sort be made with his employers; that he suffer no unnecessary degradation for his crime; that a certified check for $2,000 be placed in his hand to supply his immediate needs; and that the rest of my fortune be turned over to him in the event that he promises to live an honest and industrious life, in the future."

"Perhaps you will recognize the handwriting, Burton," said the detective, handing him the letter. "It is up to you, my boy. Admit that you are James Kent, nephew of William Griggs, and the $2,000 is yours. Proceedings against you will be dropped. You will return with me to New York, but not as a prisoner, and after you have further established your identity to the satisfaction of Benson & Kendrick, your late uncle's lawyers, the rest of the $50,000 will be placed in your hands.

"Persist in denying your identity and I shall have to arrest you and take you back to answer to the Keystone people on account of your bond to Wright & Parcelle. I know a little of your history, and I wish to tell you that Skelton's pool-room has proved a road to ruin for many another young man besides yourself."

"Let me have a look at that $2,000 check," said Burton huskily.

Bangham gave it to him.

"Can you tell me about this packet, Lattimer?" inquired the detective. "It must have left a devious trail to land finally in the hands of Skelton."

In a few words, Lattimer related the vicissitudes the packet had undergone. Bangham gave a long whistle, and rounded it off with an amused laugh.

"Skelton," cried Burton angrily, "you had this check, the photograph and my uncle's letter for nearly two weeks. Why have you kept all this from me?"

"Now, don't go off in a tantrum," answered Skelton. "I was going to give the stuff to you."

"Oh, yes," commented the detective sarcastically, "you were going to! It's so like you to do a thing like that. If I understood you right, you were going to cash the check in 'Frisco and then start a book on the races there, with Burton to help. You had an axe to grind and I'll warrant it is little of that fifty thousand Burton would ever have seen had he cast his lot with you."

"As you have rightly said, Mr. Bangham," said Burton, "this is better fortune than I deserve. I am the James Kent for whom Benson & Kendrick are looking, and I shall have no difficulty in making my claim good when we get back to New York.

"As for you," and he faced Skelton sternly, "I am done with you for all time. My uncle says that I must lead an honest and industrious life if I would inherit his money. I shall prove to the world that I can do that."

He turned to Bangham and Lattimer.

"To Wright & Parcelle, the bond company and Benson & Kendrick," he added, "I feel more than grateful and shall call personally and tell them so, as soon as I get back to New York. It may well be, Lattimer, that I owe most of this to you.

"Skelton wanted me to come on to Denver. Had I done so, instead of staying here with you, I should have been playing into his hands and so have gone from bad to worse."

"I think we have both profited by our experience of the last two weeks," returned Lattimer quietly. "My mind was under a cloud for years and, what is worse, was blind to its own undoing. The load I carried was heavier than yours, Kent, and you helped me to get rid of it."

"Dr. Wo Chan did that."

"Without your efficient aid Dr. Wo Chan could never have succeeded.'

"You are not entirely out of the woods yet," said the other.

"Perhaps not, but I can see daylight ahead and shall work steadily toward it."

"My sentiments, exactly!" cried Kent, and the two young men struck hands as though sealing a compact.

## CHAPTER XI.

## A NEW DAY.

"There's a chap out here who says his name is Larry Lattimer, but the rest of us all think he's doin' a little stringin.' He wants to see Mr. Kendrick."

Thus spoke the office boy, his head just within the door of Benson & Kendrick's private room. Both partners were there, and both gave over their work and whirled about in their chairs.

"Send him right in," said Kendrick.

Lattimer had been in Colorado some two months. Kent and Bangham had been back in New York for several weeks, and the former had made his peace with the commission men and the bond company, had proved himself the heir of William Griggs to the satisfaction of Benson & Kendrick and would soon be in possession of the money his uncle had left him.

Skelton was out on the Pacific Slope, following the races. The law could have taken account of him for his unsavory work but, since Kent himself was identified with some of it, Kendrick advised against prosecution and Skelton went his way.

Lattimer remained in Fowler under the care of Dr. Wo Chan. From Kent and Bangham the New York lawyers learned every detail of the situation, and a letter was hurried west telling Lattimer to remain in Colorado until the Chinaman thought it safe for him to leave.

The heathen doctor took a liking to Lattimer and burned many choice prayers for his recovery in the local joss-house. Whether it was owing to the prayers or the medicine, Lattimer achieved a mental and physical condition such as he had never known before.

A comparison of his present with his past startled him. Not since early boyhood had he known such nights of dreamless slumber, such days of tingling health and refreshing comfort.

During the final two weeks of his Colorado sojourn, Dr. Wo Chan prescribed life in the saddle as they lived it at the Ordway Ranch. That proved the finishing touch.

When Lattimer faced his employers, in their private room, he was so different from the Lattimer they had known that the office boy's doubts stood fully corroborated. The lacklustre light was gone from his eyes, the dead white of his face had changed to a deep bronze, and there was about him an atmosphere of buoyant energy that told of better things to come.

"Well, by Jove!" exclaimed Benson, measuring the young man with his eyes.

Kendrick's surprise was too deep for words. He did not neglect, however, to throw an "I-told-you-so" glance at the senior partner.

"It looks very much, Lattimer," remarked Benson, after greetings had been exchanged and the young man was seated, "as though that trip to Colorado had been the making of you."

"I was on a reef, Mr. Benson," said Lattimer "All the essentials for a complete wreck were at hand. I should have gone down had friends not pulled me off into deep water and started me on the right course."

"I believe you," answered Kendrick. "It isn't necessary for you to tell us anything, for we have got it all from Bangham and Kent. Had I known you were so heavily handicapped, I should have selected some one else to go out there and find the detective."

"As the matter strikes me now," smiled Lattimer, "you certainly took a risk. But luck has been on my side all the way through."

"We intend to advance you," proceeded the junior partner, "and give your abilities a chance to expand. Your salary, of course, continued while you were laid up in Colorado——"

"I am grateful for what you intend doing for me," broke in Lattimer, "but I have come to the conclusion that my forte is no more the law than it was journalism."

"You're going to leave us?"

"There are so many lawyers in New York, you know. An opportunity offers to embark in a mining venture——"

"Look out for mining ventures," warned Benson. "They are pitfalls for the unwary."

"The man who was mainly instrumental in pulling me off the reef has steered me for the mine. Dr. Wo Chan furnishes the mine, and whenever you can fool a Chinaman on a mine you're apt to catch a weasel asleep. There are four of us in on the deal—Dr. Wo Chan, a Denver friend named Patterson, Kent and myself!"

"Some of Kent's money is bound to go glimmering!" mourned Benson.

"We put in a thousand apiece," went on Lattimer. "The doctor advances my contribution and agrees to stand behind the other two and reimburse them if the mine fails to meet expectations.'

"Well," observed Kendrick, "I don't think the experience will hurt any of you. If your hopes are not realized, come back to us, Lattimer."

"I am obliged to you for your good will,"

(Continued on page eleven.)

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### Even at Last.

"In the dark, still hours, some one shouted 'Burglars!' "

"You don't say?"

"Yes, and then we all rushed out of our apartments and down the steps. In the shadows of a corner we saw a crouching figure."

"Gracious!"

"And we pummeled him until he was black and blue. Then the lights were turned on and everybody gave a cheer that could be heard a block."

"How exciting! And it was really the burglar?"

"No, it was the janitor. We had made a mistake, but everybody got the chance to settle up an old grudge."

### Sorrow of It.

Many a good man has forgotten
That there's no place like home,
When the crook is in his elbow
And the beer is topped with foam.

### Explanation.

Meyer—Your friend Cutter always speaks well of everbody.

Gyer—Mere force of habit.

Myer—How's that?

Gyer—He used to carve epitaphs on tombstones.

### The Colonel and the Mosquitoes.

The Reverend B. P. Fullerton, of St. Louis, in addressing a Presbyterian meeting in Philadelphia the other evening, told the following story by way of illustrating how diverse schools of thought were coming together nowadays:

"A Northern visitor was spending the night with the colonel, who lived on the lower, swampy reaches of the Mississippi. The stranger suffered severely because there were no mosquito-nettings over his bed, and the next morning asked Sam, the colored body-guard of the master of the house, how it was that the latter could manager to exist amid the pernicious activity of these small augers of the air.

" 'It's des lak dis, boss,' answered Sambo. 'In de fo' part uv de night de colonel's so drunk dat he don't pay no 'tention to de skeeters, an' in de las' part uv de night de skeeters is so drunk dat dey don't pay no 'tention to de colonel.' "

### Nature's Reproof.

"Them smart alecks over at Windville got pretty well punished for their meanness in saying that they didn't want none of our citizens to come to their town to see the Fourth of July doings," says the citizen of Breezetown, Kansas.

"What happened?" asks the visitor.

"Long about 7 o'clock in the evening up come a cyclone that naturally blew their celebration committee and all their fireworks over here, and just as they struck the ground a flash of lightning set off the whole shooting match and we got to see the whole show without moving out of our front yards."

### Better Off Ignorant.

Interfering friend—I suppose by this time you are ready to thank me for telling you that Miss Flip was only stringing you?

Friend—No, I'm not! Confound it! I was having a fine time before that!

### The Young Mother.

"Have you any fireworks suitable for small children?" asked the young mother.

"Yes, ma'am," answers the dealer. "We have some splendid firecrackers, Roman candles, and all such things."

"But I fear my little boy is not old enough for them."

"Then here are some pinwheels, and——"

"O, the very thing! Have you some safety pinwheels? My little boy is not yet a year old."

### Hen Eggs Outdone.

"Be a little careful about whom you send out to report hailstorms," said the managing editor.

"Why so?" asked the assistant.

"Well, you sent out the sporting editor and he stated the hailstones were as big as baseballs."

"Great Scott!"

"Then you sent out the war correspondent and he said they were as big as cannon balls."

### Changed the Program.

"How's it come you didn't have no greased pig at your Fourth of July celebration? Hank said you fellows was goin' to grease the pig so slick nobody could catch it."

"Was goin' to, but had to omit the greased pig number from the program."

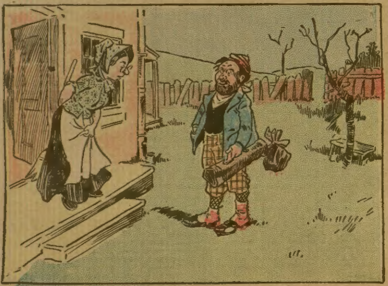
"How's that?"

"Couldn't none of us catch the pig to grease it."

### A Poor Plan.

Husband—So that new girl goes out three nights a week. I'll tell you how to keep her in. Scare her. Tell her a terrible fellow called Jack the Kisser is prowling around, kissing every girl he can catch.

Wife—doubtfully—Well, I don't know, my dear; I was a young girl once myself. I'm afraid she'd be out every night.



Tramp—Madame, I've lost me way from the links, and am nearly starved. Can I eat some grass from your front yard.

Madame—Certainly, my good man; I'll get a lawn mower so that you can cut it.

### Of No Avail.

The ragged wayfarer trudged wearily up the garden path, bathed in the May sunshine and took off his hat to the woman at the door. She eyed him keenly, and a look of recognition passed over her countenance.

"Look here," she said, "you called at this house in the middle of the winter."

"I did, ma'am," he sorrowfully admitted.

"And I gave you a good meal, on condition that you swept the snow out of my back yard."

"That's right, ma'am."

"And when you had the meal you went off without doing it."

The man passed the back of his hand tremulously over his eyes.

"Yes, ma'am," he said brokenly, "and my conscience smote me. That's why I've tramped all the way back, under the scorching sun, to finish the job."

### Experienced.

Mr. Essy—I am thinking of writing a chapter on the decline of the English young man.

Cholly—Good idea; I'll help you.

Mr. Essy—It hadn't occurred to me that you would be willing to be a study.

Cholly—Oh, ya-a-s. I can give you lots of points. I don't believe theah is any English young man who has been declined oftener than I have.

### Both Sides of It.

Her—There is nothing more disgusting than a boy who acts foolish.

Him—With the possible exception of a girl who acts boisterous.

### A Pig and a Watch.

He went into the jeweler's with the air of a man who meant to have his rights.

"I bought this here," said he, producing a dilapidated-looking watch, "about six weeks ago, and you promised if it went wrong you'd repair it."

"Yes," said the jeweler.

"Well, it won't go."

"No? Had an accident with it, perhaps?"

"Well, not exactly; but a month ago come Monday I was feeding the pig."

"Yes."

"And it fell into the trough."

"I see. But why didn't you bring it before?"

"Well, you see, I only killed the pig this morning."

### It Made Them.

"I hear the audience last night was rather cold."

"Most of the people were, at first," replied Hamm, "but when they remembered that they had paid good money to see the show they got hot."

### Still Has Exercise.

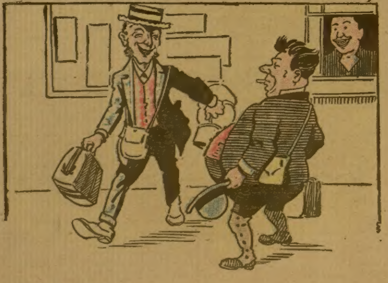
Miss Debutte—Now that you're graduated from college, don't you miss the outdoor exercise?

Mr. Greenwun—Not especially. You see, I'm serving subpoenas for a law firm now.

### Wanted Washing.

Young Mother—The doctor says you should not kiss the baby; it isn't sanitary.

Old Neighbor—Poor little fellow! Why don't you wash him?

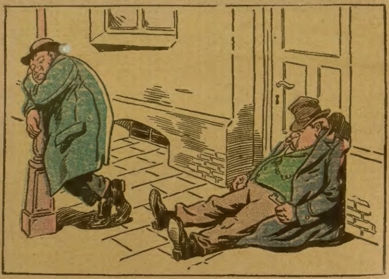


"Going on a journey?"

"Yes; you see my wife has eloped!"

"And you are going after her?"

"Going after her? Nonsense! I'm going to skip out so she won't find me when she comes back!



Meyer (at the door)—Suffel, I need a keyhole—bring me a keyhole!

Suffel (at the lamppost)—I can't reach that far.

### Feminine Financiering

Husband—Did you get that ten-dollar check your uncle sent you cashed yet?

Wife—No I haven't been out.

Husband—Well, I am sending an order to a cigar-dealer for two boxes of five-dollar cigars. I don't want to send money in an envelope. You take this ten dollars, and give me your check.

Wife—Certainly.

Husband—a day later—More money! Why, my dear, what did you do with the ten dollars your uncle sent you?"

Wife—in a huff—You took it for cigars.

### A Suggestion.

After we have dodged around the corner and have left behind us the gay party on the lawn where the giddy young girl is endeavoring to help set off the fireworks, our friend turns to us and says:

"It would make a bully subject for a debating society, wouldn't it?"

"Wouldn't what?" we ask, straightening our necktie.

"Resolved: That a Woman Can Do More Damage with a Roman Candle Than with a Garden Hose."

### It Is.

"Hands Off"—thus read the fireworks sign,
But he was so inclined to scoff:
He held a fiercely sputt'ring mine
And now the most of his hand's off.

### Might as Well.

We're sure to rise, all blithe and gay,
Before the summertime is through
To ask it—So, here goes today,
This: Is it Hot Enough for You?

### At Bacon Ridge.

Drummer—Moving pictures at the town hall last night, eh? How was the "Cannon Ball Express?'

Postmaster—Too plagued natural. Why, bless your heart, mister, when the train came to the tunnels it looked so lifelike that the boys out in the audience began to kiss the gals right before everybody.

### His Present.

Sweet Girl—Mother, George told me solemnly that that pretty hairpin-holder he gave me cost five dollars; yet today I saw exactly the same kind on sale for ten cents.

Mother—You know, my dear, George is very religious. Most likely he bought that at a church fair.

### Two Readings.

Funny Fellow—entering a restaurant—I see you have a sign out here 'Oysters. Families supplied.'

Proprietor—Yes, sir.

Funny Fellow—Well, I'd like a family. He, he!

Proprietor—Sam, bring an oyster's family for the gentleman.

### The Secret of Beauty.

Miss De Plain—Doctor, what is the secret of beauty?

Family Physician—confidentially—Be born pretty.

### Lifelike

Visitor—How lifelike are the waves of the sea!

Fisherman—Yes. They come to the beach in great style, and goes away broke.

# JOLLITY

### Charity by Machinery.

Poor Man—W'u'd ye be so kind, sir, as to stop a moment! It was you, sir, that saved me wife's life last year by givin' me a dollar fer some medicine. Please, sir, she's sick ag'in, an' the same way.

Mr. Highmind—I have recently been convinced of the folly of indiscriminate giving, and I now distribute by donations through the Business Men's Charity Trust, organized for the purpose of investigating each case. I left a dollar with the secretary not five minutes ago. Go to him and tell your story.

Mr. Highmind—Ah! Did you go to the secretary, as I directed?

"I did, sir, an' he gave me a five-cent piece wid a hole in it."

"Eh? Is that all?"

"Yes, sir. I told him about your dollar, but he said the other ninety-five cents was kept for salaries an' expenses."

### Too Great a Risk

Jinks—Has a husband a right to open his wife's letters?

Blinks—a lawyer—Certainly, sir, certainly; open all you please.

"Well, here is a letter my wife has written to your wife, and handed me to deliver. I feel pretty sure there's something unpleasant in it about me. I wish you'd open it, and, if there is, just burn it up."

"Humph! Does my wife know your wife is going to write to her?"

"Yes."

"And if my wife doesn't get this letter she'll soon find it out, won't she?"

"Of course."

"On second thought, I believe there is a new law which makes it a penitentiary offense to open a wife's letters. I couldn't take the risk, sir; indeed, I couldn't."

### All Doubtful.

"Dat was a great wedding, Sam."

"Deed et was."

"Well, who was de lucky man?"

"Dat's hahd to say. De groom thought he was de lucky man till he squinted et de bride and foun' out she had wrinkles lak a weddeh map."

"Huh!"

"Den de best man thought he was de lucky man till he foun' out de rabbit's foot de groom had gidden him was er cat's foot."

"Lan's! Den de preacheh mus' hab been de lucky man?"

"Well, he kinder puffed up det way till arteh de ceremony en den he discobehed det de dollar de groom had passed him es a fee was lead."

### A Forgetful Damsel.

"What's the matter, dear, you look puzzled?" said Tess, meeting Jess on the avenue.

"I'm sure I lost something just now," replied Jess, "but I can't think what it was."

"Probably it wasn't anything very important——"

"No, it wasn't; I remember now. It was that little Mr. Sniffkins, who was walking with me."

### No Faith in the Simile.

Mr. Upmore—"What is your objection to young Throggins coming to see our Katherine?I consider him perfectly unobjectionable. He's as clean as a hound's tooth."

Mrs. Upmore—"Just about."

### As a Cure.

Mrs. Slimdiet—So you have placed yourself under the care of a physician who reduces superfluous flesh? Did he recommend any special diet?

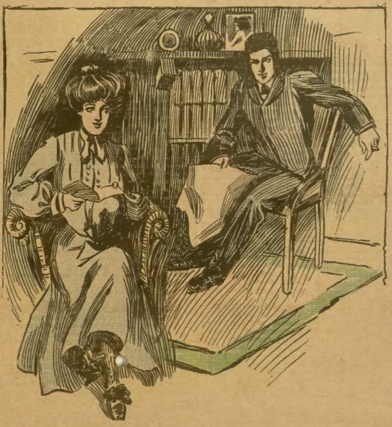
New Boarder—No, madam. He simply recommended your boarding house.

### Invisible to Some.

"Henry," said Mrs. Meeker, as she laid aside the paper, "I don't see the point to these everlasting jokes about a man being henpecked."

"No, I suppose not, my dear," replied Mr. Meeker; "neither does the man."

### AFTER THE CHICAGO WEDDING.



"How much did you pay the minister, Jack?"
"Nothing."
"How was that?"
"I've got to begin saving up for alimony."

### An Irishman's Retort.

An Irishman once met an Englishman who had an artificial leg. Being of a sympathetic nature, Pat inquired the cause of the loss of the limb, whereupon the Englishman said:

"A short time ago I discovered that there was some Irish blood in my body, and that it had settled in this leg, so I had it cut off."

"'Tis a pity it didn't settle in your head," come the quick retort.

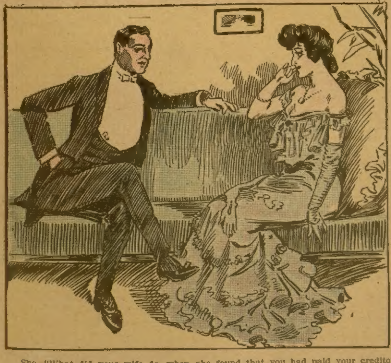
### Disappointed.

Mayme—Why did you allow him to turn down the gas?

Edyth—Oh, merely out of curiosity. I wanted to see if he would try to kiss me.

Mayme—And was your curiosity satisfied?

Edyth—I should say not. He only kissed me once.



She—"What did your wife do, when she found that you had paid your creditor with her dowry?"

He—"Do? Why, she divorced me, and married the creditor."

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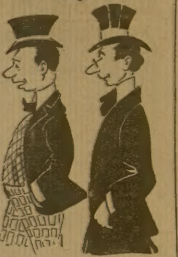
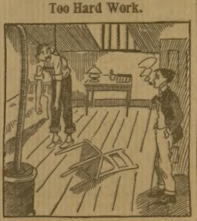
## Rough.



"When I'm in the country, you know, I try to kiss the milkmaids."

"Yes, I have heard the milkmaids are annoyed by calves while milking."

## Too Hard Work.



Bohemian Friend—Trying to commit suicide, old man? But why didn't you put the confounded rope round your neck?

The Victim—I did, but it nearly choked me.

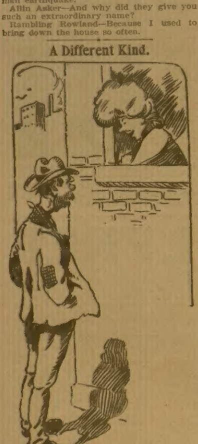
## His Nerve.

Rambling Rowland—Was I ever a great actor? Why, they used to call me the "Human earthquake."

Allin Asker—And why did they give you such an extraordinary name?

Rambling Rowland—Because I used to bring down the house so often.

## A Different Kind.



amp—Please give me a bite.

d Lady—I'm sorry, but I don't keep a

# DOCTOR RENHART'S WIFE;

or

# THE FATAL HONEYMOON.

By J. M. MERRILL, author of "Birdella," "Marching Through Dixie," "Blackade," etc.

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## CHAPTER XII.

Mountain Tom had called again to learn about Demonia's condition. He had departed with an assurance to Harmonia that she should soon have a helper in caring for her sister.

After the strange man's departure, Harmoia saw on the floor a small wad of yellow paper. She picked it up and was about to consign it to the flames, when her native curiosity prompted her to open it. It proved to be the copy of a telegram.

It was the one sent by Tom Burling on the previous day. Instantly the thoughts of Harmonia flew into the past.

There was something about the name Midget. Where had she seen that name on paper before?

"Ah, I have it!" she almost gasped. "That was the name that was signed to the note that sent Doctor Reinhart into exile before the end of his honeymoon.!"

Strange and thrilling memories thronged the girl's brain.

She recalled some of them with a sad pleasure. Doctor Renhart had been very dear to her once. She might have won him before he set his heart on Demonia. Harmonia was the soul of honor. She could not be disloyal to her twin—never!

What happy sadness haunted her at sight of the telegram.

Harmonia went slowly to her sick sister. She contemplated the thin, worn face, the pitiful droop of the once red lips, now blanched to a dead pallor; noted the masses of Titian hair smothering the pillow, and thought how sorrowful it had all been. The girl bit her lip. She was becoming hot with the memory of Doctor Renhart's treachery.

"I am still here to trouble you, Harm," said the sick girl, with a wan smile.

"You know I do not allow that," returned the tall twin, smiling down on the sick girl with her mind awander.

Harmonia sat a long time beside her sister, who seemed stronger this morning. She fingered the telegram nervously. The tall twin was sometimes impetuous despite her languerous nature. She produced the bit of yellow paper and shoved it to Demonia.

"I am to have an assistant," she said.

Demonia read the telegram, gasped and fell back on her pillow in a dead faint. Harmonia was a fright. She feared she had killed Demonia. She had not thought of such an effect. The miserable telegram—that hated name! She tore the yellow paper to bits and cast them to the winds.

Demonia was better soon. She was deeply moved by the shock and Harmonia blamed herself for being indiscrete. At length the sick girl spoke of the telegram.

"It affected you badly, Demon," said Harmonia. "I was a fool to show it to you. Will you ever forgive——"

"Don't," protested the other. "You did right."

"But you have not forgotten——"

"I shall never forget, Harmonia."

"I wish it were otherwise, Demon."

"I do not. Harmonia, tell me who sent that telegram," said Demonia, in a way that reminded the other of her sister's former masterfulness.

"It was the man from Tiger City."

"Mr. Burling?"

"Tom Burling, Demon."

"And he is still here. Why does he linger? Has he business——"

"Business of a pressing nature he tells me," broke in Harmonia. "You must forget all this, Demon, and try and rest for a spell."

The tall twin started to leave the room. A plaintive voice called her back.

"Don't leave me, Harm," said the sick girl, with quivering lips and tear-wet eyes. "I wish to talk."

"But it is not good for you to talk, Demon. I shall not——"

"If I do not talk I shall die!" asserted Demonia, her brown eyes full. "Why haven't you told me of him?"

"Of him?"

"Of Mr. Burling. Why hasn't he been to see me? He has been very kind, Harmonia."

"Indeed he has," assented the sister.

"Has he asked after me?"

"A thousand times, Demon, but——"

"I wish to see him, Harm. I have dreamed of him often, but I did not know that he was near."

"No, dear. You shall see him when you are better."

"I must see him right away. It soon may be too late. You saw that name on the paper. It was a coincidence, perhaps——"

"That is all, dear."

"I am not sure. When he comes I shall know, Harm!"

"Yes, Demonia?"

"He knew Doctor Renhart. He can tell me something about him if I will let him. Oh, I must know all there is to know. Send him here at once," cried the sick girl, hysterically.

Harmonia became alarmed. Her sister was becoming restless. Everything had gone wrong. It was all her fault. If Demonia should die she had herself to blame. That miserable telegram! Of all things how foolish of her to show it to her sister. She had not forgotten Doctor Renhart. Her mind still dwelt on the past. All this retarded recovery.

She went out, determined to fetch the strange mountain man to see her sick sister. She did not find him. Farmer Hull said that the sandy complected man had gone away on the train

"Which way?" asked Harmonia.

"East."

"Did he leave any word?"

"Not a thing, Miss Peprys."

Here was another disappointment. Harmonia soothed her sister with a fib. White lies with the blonde twin were not new.

Another night and the new nurse got off the train and was driven home by Farmer Hull. Harmonia was introduced to Mrs. Lowndes and liked her at once. Her pleasant face and kindly eyes were very attractive.

Mrs. Lowndes went at once to Demonia. The meeting between the two was quite affecting. The injured girl was indeed glad to meet again the woman of the mountain cottage at Tiger City

Tom's sister had a voice that soothed and quieted Demonia.

"How good of you to come," said the sick one.

"Not at all. Tom sent for me."

"He, too, has been more than kind," Tears started to the eyes of Demonia.

After a time, Mrs. Lowndes smoothed the pillow, kissed the faded cheek of the young widow and left the room.

Eearly the next morning, Demonia inquired after Tom. Mrs. Lowndes, who had taken the care of Demonia off her sister's hands, sat smoothing the pillow and watching the sunlight on the wall.

"He has gone East on business," said the nurse.

'And Harmonm, where is she?"

"Sne is out with Captain Axby I believe. Your sister has been closely housed for a fortnight and is in need of a change; that is why I am here."

Demonia lay quiet for some time. She was thinking deeply. Suddenly she touched the hand of the nurse, saying:

"You knew Doctor Renhart, Mrs. Lowndes. Tell me something about him?"

The pale lips quivered and the brown eyes of the speaker filled.

"He was a noble man, Miss Peprys."

"Go on. Tell me all you know—about his wife also,' persisted Demonia.

"Can you stand it, my dear? I would not excite you——"

"I am dying to hear all about the doctor. He was my—my frined. You must tell me of him; I shall die if you do not."

"Tnere is much to tell. He was a physician to the mining men, and did much to alleviate suffering. He and Tom were very good friends."

"But this is not all. About his wife—he had one you said?"

"Yes, he married, but was never happy afterward."

"Did you know her? Why was he unhappy?"

"She was a stranger to me. I have met her since the marriage, however. It is useless to talk of this."

The speaker, was herself becoming emotional. Her bosom heaved and she seemed smothering her inward feelings with an effort.

The brown eyes of the invalid read her face wistfully.

"You say he was a noble man. Why then did he desert his wife so suddenly? He surely wronged her most bitterly," said Demonia, in a husky voice.

She was thinking of the woman of the Tiger City cemetery, who had proclaimed herself the widow of Doctor Renhart. It was this thought that was wrecking the only happiness Demonia ever experienced.

"I—I—would rather not talk of these things," stammered Mrs. Lowndes. She rose and walked to the door. Mrs. Hull looked in just then to say that a lady was in waiting below to see the patient.

"I will see her," said Tom Burling's sister, accompanying the farmer's wife to the plain, little parlor, where a veiled woman sat tapping the floor nervously with one kid-covered foot.

## CHAPTER XIII.

"You are the nurse?" said the veiled woman, addressing Mrs. Lowndes.

The lady assented.

"Then it's of you I ask to see the poor sick lady."

"I am not sure that she ought to see strangers," said Mrs. Lowndes. "Sne is still very far from being strong——"

"She will see me. I am not a stranger. I have something to tell her," said the visitor, casting aside her veil, revealing a dark, handsome face.

Mrs. Lowndes started. She had seen this woman before. Where? Ah, she remembered now. It was at the funeral of the murdered man of Tiger City. She had claimed to be his widow. Why had she come here now? Mrs. Lowndes did not like that face. It was full of cunning and duplicity.

"You may send up your card," said the nurse.

The woman drew forth a card, hastily scrawling a name. This she handed to Tom's sister. The latter quitted the room. She was gone a long time.

The visitor became impatient. She sprang up and paced the floor.

She had dropped her veil when Mrs. Lowndes came back.

"Well!" exclaimed the visitor.

"She will see you," was the laconic reply.

Mrs. Renhart was shown to the presence of her rival, the second widow of the erring sinner of Tiger City.

Demonia had gained strength during the brief time Tom's sister had been with her. She felt a slight quiver of apprehension when she read the name on the card.

"You need not see unless you like," Mrs. Lowndes had said.

"Oh, I must see her."

Demonia remembered the interview at Tiger City cemetery. She had not warmed toward Eulene Renhart then, she was not warming toward her now. Anything concerning the late doctor, however, appealed to her. It was strange she could not get him off her mind. She had cried many a time because he lay there dead in that lonely spot on the mountain. She ought to hate him. And she was not his wife. That was the unkindest cut of all.

The visitor came in slowly, as if apprehensive of her reception.

Demonia held out a welcome hand. She sat, pale as wraith amid tne cushions of a big Morris chair.

"I only heard of this a few days ago," said Eulene.

"It is very kind of you to come. I know who my friends are now."

"Yes," said the visitor, "it is nice to have lots of friends. You are much better they tell me."

The speaker sat down beside Demonia and smoothed her poor, thin hands.

"I thought I might be of some use," pursued Eulene. "This is such a dreadful country. We are never knowing what is to come next. You and I are in the same boat so far as he is concerned. We both hate him."

Demonia sat with closed eyes.

"He cheated me of happiness, and you of a home. I have heard all about it, Miss Peprys, and I am here to condole with you over a villain's misdeeds."

Demonia chilled toward the speaker. Her words were unpleasant. She did not ask for such sympathy.

"I was not nice to you out there in the mountains. Can you forgive me?"

"There is nothing to forgive," said Demonia, softly.

A chill went deep. The sick girl was wishing now for her caller to go.

"Can I not do something for you? My late husband deserted me only to meet you and make another victim. I——"

"Please do not talk of him," broke in Demonia with sudden spirit. "I am satisfied to let the dead rest."

"I am not."

Eulene sprang up and went to a little table on which stood several vials and glasses. She stood here a moment with her back to Demonia. There was a burning light in her deep, black eyes, a subdued fire in her dark cheeks. The sick girl saw nothing, however. She closed her eyes wearily.

When she opened them again, Eulene was approaching, holding out her hand.

"I shall go at once if you refuse my aid, Miss Peprys.'

'You cannot be of any service," murmured the sick girl.

"Good-by. I may drop in again when you are better."

Eulene Renhart swept noiselessly from the room. She had done that which she had come to accomplish. Hatred of her rival rankled deep in the heart of this unlovely woman.

"Rolfe deserted me to go to her," she muttered as she descended the stairs. "Let her go to him—to the bottomless pit with them both!"

The farmer's wife showed the visitor to the door.

Mrs. Lowndes was nowhere to be seen. She was on the alert, however. She had suspected mischief from the moment the strange woman entered the house.

Eulene walked swiftly away from the vicinity.

She had not proceeded far when she heard wheels on the heavy road. A vehicle approached from the west. Two persons occupied the seat, a man and girl. The veiled female beside the road cast only a side glance at them.

The light rig was going at great speed. Nevertheless the face of the man gave Eulene a thrill. She turned and gazed after the speeding vehicle.

Her heart thumped a few rapid tattoes then ceased to beat. She reeled dizzily against a tree.

"Great God!" she ejaculated. "That face!"

The woman clung weakly to the bole of the tree for support. Several minutes elapsed ere she was able to control her emotions. The carriage and its occupants were now out of sight beyond a clump of maples.

Eulene walked back a few rods till she again caught sight of the rig and its occupants. It had halted before the Hull door. A lady alighted. The man then drove away, but not toward the solitary watcher.

"It cannot be, no, it cannot be,' she murmured. "And it was such a resemblance!"

It was plain that the Widow Renhart was deeply moved. Her face remained like snow for a long time. She panted as she walked. Reaching a house she went in and sought rest in a room she had engaged for the occasion.

Eulene was of a revengeful disposition.

She could not forgive her wrongs, not even after the wrong doer was dead.

She sat for a long time communing with her thoughts. Of a sudden she started up and stood, white and trembling, in the center of the floor.

"Oh, what have I done?" she moaned. "Fool that I was! Poor child, she was not to blame for his deviltry. I must go back to Hull house. But it is too late now. She has taken the fatal dose! I am as bad as he who sleeps on Tiger mountain!"

She reeled to her chair in which she sat sobbing and moaning. Her tears were dry as dust. A little moisture of the eyes would have been welcome. This did not come. Eulene was a seething volcano of thought. She was being consumed. She knew it. That face came again to haunt her. She groveled at the feet of her own soul. It was a bitter, hateful battle.

I'll go and face the worst!" she finally exclaimed.

Once more she sought the open air. A man was walking toward her from the direction of Hull house. It was Captain Axby. He did not see Eulene till almost upon her.

The girl had dropped her veil on his approach. She stood silent at the side of the road. She faced him and touched his arm.

Meantime, Mrs. Lowndes had not been idle. The moment she recognized the veiled visitor she became suspicious. She had seen this woman at the funeral of the murdered doctor. Her dark face, with its sinister, black eyes, did not appeal to her. There was some strange mystery about all the doings that this good woman had as yet been unable to fathom. She would not trust Eulene out of her sight.

It was strange that she should hunt up Demonia and wish to speak with her. There was mischief in the air and Mrs. Lowndes resolved to be alert.

She followed the tall beauty to the sick room. So deftly did she tread, however, the one under espionage never suspected the truth.

Through the keyhole, Mrs. Lowndes continued to act the spy. Despicable business? Of course, it was. But the spy was very much in earnest. She did not stop at trifles. She was not conventional in her own home. She had a nice sense of honor, yet at times this had to be cast aside. The present occasion seemed to demand it. Mrs Lowndes never hesitated where her duty was concerned. She therefore spied upon the [illegible] of Demonia's visitor.

She saw all that passed within the sick room. She heard not a word of the conversation. This did not matter. It was the movements of the visitor that most interested the woman at the keyhole.

When Eulene went to the little medicine stand she was facing the spy's position. The eye at the door saw her pour liquid from a vial into one of the medicine glasses—into two of them. The full intent was at once manifest.

Mrs. Lowndes entered the room soon after the departure of the visitor.

Demonia called for her medicine.

"One moment, please," said Mrs. Lowndes, calling to sleeping tabby who lay coiled in a corner. The cat came obediently. She refused the water in the glass offered by the woman. Mrs. Lowndes went out. She brought a saucer of rich, new milk. Into this she poured some of the medicine. Tabby licked up the milk in a hurry.

Presently the cat uttered a yowl. Then she rolled in agony on the floor.

"I thought so!" muttered Mrs. Lowndes, as the cat gave one final contortion and lay dead at her feet.

## CHAPTER XIV.

The bold movement of the veiled woman rather startled Captain Axby.

"Ah, you wish to speak with me?" he articulated.

"Yes," she said mechanically.

He waited for her to proceed. He continued to walk, she following at his side. That she was visibly agitated, he could readily see. He was no doubt, puzzled. He kept his peace, however. One of ten encountered strange people in this western country.

"What are you doing here?

Her voice trembled in spite of the stern fight she made for mastery of herself.

"I am wholly on private business, madam," said he.

A faint alarm touched his soul. Something in the woman's voice reminded him of someone. He bit his lip and waited. The road was shaded, and the way level and unobstructed. No prying eyes were likely to see them.

"Does—does—your business relate to the sick woman at Farmer Hull's?" faltered Eulene.

"Perhaps it does."

He was collecting his thoughts, thinking hard. To be thus hailed and catechised by a strange female was not wholly to his liking. The captain had been the principal in so many affairs of the heart he knew not where this affair might be leading.

"If you will lift your veil, madam, we will stand on an even footing," he said, at length. "I am at present in the dark."

The woman walking at his side did not imediately reply. At length she pressed his arm with her slim fingers and cried hoarsely:

"Is it possible that you do not know me?"

"Captain Axby knows so may people," he said with a laugh, "but I must confess that from sound of your voice, without sight of your face, I am at a loss. We men of war meet many ladies in our travels about the wo[illegible]

"Captain Axby!" she gasped, her fingers tightening their hold.

"The same, at your service, madam."

He laughed as if amused. She was quiet for some time.

"I think I understand," said he. "You have mistaken me for someone else. Whom did you think I was?"

Eulene did not reply. She was wrestling with problems that very nearly mastered her sanity.

"If you will lift your veil, perhaps I may solve this mystery," he said, his eyes trying to penetrate the meshes of that flimsy covering.

They had now reached a point in the road where a bridge spanned a deep ravine. They paused, he leaning against the railing. S[illegible] as if the effort hurt her. Eulene [illegible] her veil and looked him fairly between the eyes. If she had thought to see him recoil at sight of her face she was disappointed.

"A pretty woman," he remarked, with a laugh, "but I do not know you."

"How can you say that

"I can say the truth and never wince, Mi[illegible]

"I am Mrs. Doctor R[illegible]hart!" she exclaimed, hotly; and

Indeed!" He lifted h[illegible] brows and seemed stu[illegible] "I knew the doctor. He was killed at Tiger City by [illegible] And you are his widow. How [illegible] pitying ring in his voice madd[illegible]

There was nothing [illegible] his death, I mean. He [illegible] scoundrel

Well, now you mention it, I am quite of that opinion, myself," said the capt[illegible] "You are not the only girl he deceived. H[illegible] seemed to run amuck with beautiful women."

The captain looked afar off and drew out [illegible] morocco case. From this he extracted a [illegible] bit off the end and said

W[illegible]l my smoking offend you, Mrs. Renhart?

Nothing is offensive to me now," she articulated

He lit the weed and smoked calmly. The two continued to stand with their backs to the railing of the bridge.

And you are Captain Axby," she said, after a brief silence. "I have heard your name. I did not expect ever to meet you."

"No? Well, you see, the unexpected is what often happens. Now I never once thought to meet the charming Mrs. Renhart—that is, the first one. I knew one of his widows very intimately

"How can you——"

"How can I speak the truth so abruptly you would ask? That is the nature of a soldier, madam. I am sorry for you, pon honor, I am. The other widow lies sick unto death, injured in a railway accident, but, I firmly believe dying from heart sickness over that prince of villains whose name you bear."

"You refer to the young woman at Hull farm?"

Eulene had dropped her veil and was trying hard to appear calm.

"Exactly. You know her

"I have met her. She is not Doctor Renhart's widow. I am that person. I saw her at the cemetery——

"And you two wailing females compared notes, eh?" a smile crossing his handsome face. She saw that smile and winced.

"You may call it that if you like. She knows that she is not his widow."

"So she acquiesced in the claim of a stranger," he said, slowly, "never once imagining that you might be an imposter."

"That is what she did. There was no reasonable chance for doubt. Nobody would be fool enough to wish to claim relationship to such a scamp as Rolfe Renhart, unless it was a fact. I am sure——"

"Of course a lady like yourself would not," he broke in, "but an unscrupulous person might claim to be the dead man's wife because of his property holdings."

"He had none. He died in comparative poverty."

"There's where you are mistaken. Doctor Renhart had a mining claim that, had he lived, would have made him a millionaire."

"Is this true?"

Despite her numerous troubles, Eulene was not above mercenary feeling. She clutched at the words of the captain with vivid eagerness.

"Yes, it is true. I have found out all about his affairs. He was on the point of realizing great wealth. Pity that he had to die."

"It was Heaven's providence. I am glad of it. Tell me about this fortune—the mine that was to make him wealthy!"

A covert smile touched her companion's face.

"I see a team coming. Let us walk up the ravine a ways. I will tell you all about it as we walk along. Of course, if you can substantiate your claim of wife you will come in for a goodly share of this wealth. I trust it may be so, for I have taken a liking to you, Mrs. Renhart.

She consented to his request willingly enough.

She thought of the poor, ailing woman in the farmhouse and wondered if she were dead. The poison she had put in the medicine may have worked before now. Eulene shuddered in thought. It might be better so, however. Demonia would not stand in the way of her claiming the dead doctor's fortune. The claims made for the doctor by Captain Axby puzzled and mystified her. She was in a way dazed by her own wild imaginings. —Some things were past her comprehending. Why, then, bother over them? She would go in and claim the mine and its future output in the name of the widow of Doctor Renhart.

Walking along a narrow path the two soon came to a pile or rocks pointing craggy fingers upward toward heaven. It was an uncanny spot, shadowed by a thick growth of cedars. Eulene halted an instant and stood contemplating a wild scene. Below, the rock points broke the surface at intervals. Far, far down, hundreds of feet, a faint thread of water was seen to trickle. The bottom of the abyss was so far away, so dark and forbidding, that the woman shrank back, alarmed. A mis-step on the edge of the gulf meant death on the rocks below.

"What a horrid place!" exclaimed Eulene. "And yet I like it."

Captain Axby stepped to the verge of the declivity and gazed into the depths below. His fine figure was pleasing to the eye. Eulene drew away, shuddering. Temptation assailed her guilty heart. One sharp push and the gallant captain would go down to death. That the temptation was in her heart, the girl-widow could not deny.

She shrank within herself and shuddered.

"Come up and look with me," he called, turning half round, holding out his hand.

She held back, however. He laughed at her f[illegible]

"Are all women such coward[illegible] he asked lightly

[illegible] coward——"

[illegible]e and stand by me. You will see something grand down yonder. I can point it out as you have not yet seen it." He stepped down, put his arm about her slender waist and drew her forcibly to the edge of the precipice

His dark, evil face so close to hers, was transfigured. With sudden weird awakening she recognized the man. She had made no mistake. He held her in a terrible clasp.

Eulene, darling, kiss me! You will not. Pettish girl! Well, I shall steal one before we part! He pressed a hot kiss against her cheek, then pushed her from him, raised her in his sinewy arms, poised the slight form one instant in the air, then flung her shrieking into the ragged abyss below.

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## Lattimer's Strange Case.

(Continued from page seven.)

Lattimer answered. "A new day has dawned for James Kent and me. We both had a fight, and we both came near to going down, but fate befriended us at the [illegible]

P[illegible] has looked this mine over and [illegible] the making of a bonanza. He wouldn't take fifty thousand for his quarter interest. We're going in for all we are worth, and we're going to win!

"Where is the mine, and what is the name of it?" asked Kendrick

[illegible] Western Color[illegible] was known [illegible] plain 'Number [illegible] I have [illegible]tened it the 'Star [illegible]ent.' The [illegible] owe me something [illegible] and here is where we break e[illegible]

When the young man, with all his newborn energy and inspiring hopes, had left the office, Kendrick turned to Benson.

"What is your opinion of Lattimer, now?" he inquired.

"He'll win," was the brief but decisive [illegible] "I shouldn't mind having a [illegible] stock [illegible] and Crescent my-[illegible]

(The end.)

## Why Girls Like Candy.

Nature is the wisdom of science in operation, and true science is the knowledge of why and how nature operates. No truer scientist has appeared of late than Dr. F. S. Lee of Columbia university, who comes forward with the explanation of girls' fondness for candy. The explanation shows that the girls are with nature and nature is with the girls. They are sweetly walking hand in hand in this matter, and all the wise talk hitherto against the candy-eating habit amounts to so much calorified atmosphere.

The data collected by Prof. Lee was obtained from frogs, but this does not invalidate his conclusions in any way. Scientists get all their best knowledge of humans from frogs nowadays. Without a frog and "wave lines" scientists would be practically out of business. Now, fatigue is manifested in two ways—diminution of lifting power and slowing down of muscular contraction.

A woman, for instance, can lift a grand piano in the morning, whereas by noon she can barely lift a baby-grand piano. That means that she is growing fatigued, or, chemically speaking, burning up the carbohydrates in her system. Let her eat dextrose and almost instantly she is in the grand piano lifting class again. And dextrose is candy in the rough.

Prof. Lee says a woman would hardly be worth her keep without plenty of carbohydrates in her tissues—which means that the 80-cent box of chocolates to your best girl is no mere luxury for an hour's nibbling, but a barrier against fatigue, a preservative of the blessed carbohydrates and the foundation of real lifting and staying power in the person you adore.—Judge.

## Got a Better One.

The farmerish looking man had dropped into the book store to ask for a certain schoolbook, and the clerk took him for an easy one to work, and softly inquired:

"May I ask if you are a republican in politics?"

"[illegible]n," was the reply.

"Then I wish to call your attention to this book. It is a biography of Theodore Roosevelt, and is going off like hot cakes. [illegible] all his adventures from the time he was born to his last hunt in Colorado."

"No, I guess I don't care for it," was the reply.

"You'll find it very interesting."

"But I've read of all his adventures in the papers."

"Not all of them, I think."

"Well, one or two nights have been left out, but, do you know, I don't think he was such a very brave boy when he was young."

"You don't? Why, who could be braver?"

"My son Bill. Do you know what he did the other morning when the weather was at zero? Went right out and touched his tongue to the ax, and if you'll show me where and when our President did that in his boyhood I'll buy a half dozen of his books of you. Yes, sir; touched his tongue to a frosty ax, and it took more'n a gallon of hot water to loosen it, and you just keep your eyes on Bill and see if he don't make this old world hum before he is 30 years old!"

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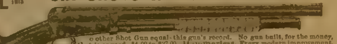

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...BY...
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### CHAPTER VI.

### "WAR TO THE KNIFE."

Next morning Ned Stearns had a visitor at the headquarters of the prairie rangers. An ill-favored halfbreed Indian, who gave his name as Charley Bighatchet, came in and made it known that he wanted a private interview with the young borderman.

Ned looked him over and did not like him a bit. He was a treacherous appearing chap, with slit-like eyes, lantern jaws, and a cruel mouth that drooped at the corners. His face was marked with numerous scars and his hands were seared by knife-cuts evidently made at different periods of his career. He was clad in buckskin so worn and dirty that everything on him except his hat might have proclaimed him an Indian tramp. The hat was one of those conical-crowned, wide-rimmed Mexican creations and it was so new, so spotless and so shining that it made his other garments appear more hopelessly dingy and dilapidated than they would have appeared had the hat matched them. He was armed to the teeth, and looking out through the open door, Ned saw that he had come to the place on a big, tough mustang that showed no signs of having been ridden far or hard.

"You have not come far," he said to the halfbreed. "Where are you from?"

"I live north of here," was the evasive answer. "See you alone?"

"I have no secrets from these comrades of mine," replied the young ranger.

"But I have," leered the halfbreed. "I tell you. You tell um all if want to, but I tell no one but you."

Ned smiled assent, and at a signal from him such of the rangers as were present retired to an inner room or went outside.

"Now be quick about it," said Ned as soon as the two were alone.

"Letter in here." The halfbreed produced a large, somewhat soiled and rumpled envelope. "Open and read um—it tell you straight."

Ned tore the envelope open, extracted the letter and read:

"To the captain of the prairie rangers: The writer of this states frankly that he is interested for the people who claim title to all of the rich mining and ranch lands round about you. He knows who pays you for staying here and what you are paid to do. He has a proposition to make to you. Pull out of here with your party till we can get possession and you can have practically all the money you want. This offer is made in good faith, as you can be convinced if you will ride over to Deadwood, call at the Imlay House and ask for Colonel Calderon. Be wise. You have only one life to live, and with an indepenent fortune you can be something better than a mere watchman of other men's property. The halfbreed will receive any message that you may care to confide to him."

The letter was unsigned. Ned slowly tore it into bits and cast all the pieces into the fire, watching them as they were consumed. Then he turned to the waiting messenger and said

"The answer is in the smoke."

"No understand."

"Get out! That's all."

The halfbreed nodded stolidly and, speaking not another word, went outside, mounted and rode away. Ned stood before the house and watched him thoughtfully.

"That mustang is fresh. The Indian has come with that note from some place nearer than Deadwood, by many miles. Now I have some work for Bud Manton, and Bud's getting moss-grown, or at least he thinks he is."

Reentering the house, he quickly put Manton on the halfbreed's trail, with instructions not to come back until he could report where the messenger had gone and whom he had met and conferred with.

It was twelve o'clock when Manton returned. The scout was smiling, and Ned divined that he had been successful.

"The halfbreed was slick and would have thrown anyone but a trained Indian trailer off the scent," declared Bud, "but I didn't take lessons of the Teton Sioux to no purpose, as you'll know presently. The halfbreed met a white man, down on the river bank, about ten miles from here, and when the white man heard what the mixblood had to say he cussed shamefully!"

"Who was it?"

"That stovepipe fellow that you wouldn't let us put through right and proper—that's who it was an' no mistake."

Ned whistled.

"But he wore a slouch hat and other togs to match, today, just like a westerner," continued Bud. "He had some guns and knives strapped to him, and I must say that he looked like about anything but a tenderfoot."

"Things are moving now, sure," commented Ned, "and—But who is coming now? That's a woman riding up the trail." The ranger captain went to the door and, shading his eyes with his hand, looked down the trail. "It's Lury, that's who it is!" he added, Bud thought more than gladly. "I'll just run down and meet her."

"Maybe she can give you some pointers on that Norman," suggested Manton. "He was posing as her friend yesterday and that was all that saved him from all the work of the tenderfoot degree."

"Lury has seen this man before, and she does not like him; but she really knows little more about him than we do," exclaimed Ned. "Have someone here to take care of her horse. Of course she will honor us by staying to dinner."

Then he went away.

"I'm so glad to see you!" he cried as Lura drew rein beside him a little way down the trail. "I am flattered and my boys will be glad that you thought of us on this Saturday, your only weekday out of school. You're going to have dinner with us—it's about ready—and afterward you'll visit with us awhile before I escort you back to Roorback's. Is it a go?"

"Yes, it's a go," she said, he thought, a bit wearily, "but all that is of little moment besides what I really came for."

Now he was leading the beast she rode—one of Rastus's team horses—up toward the house, and she was sitting half dejectedly in the saddle, with a more serious look at him out of her brown eyes than he had ever seen in them before.

"What's it all about, Lury?" He half turned, still walking ahead and leading the horse, and regarded her curiously. "Tell me."

"It's about that man, Noxon Norman. I'm thinking he's going to turn out bad or worse."

"I shouldn't be greatly surprised if he did," answered Ned, "but he's going to do you no harm—you believe that, don't you?"

"I can't believe that and believe what he says too," she answered, dolefully.

"Then don't believe him, for he is a liar!" Ned, said, so sharply that the words startled her. "Have dinner and rest. Then, as we ride back together to Roorback's, you can tell me anything you want to. I promise [illegible] little gi[illegible] look ple[illegible] Thaddeus Tucker, the eminent specialist, will want you to take a quart or [illegible] of the Great American Compound."

She was smiling as she preceded him into the house and was greeted more than cordially by several of the prairie rangers. Something in the honest faces and voices of these men reassured her and she felt herself nerved by somewhat of their bravery and self-reliance. In the presence of such friends as these she lost all thought of the menace of Noxon Norman, and when, on the way back down the trail, she told Ned of the Ohioan's visit at her uncle's, the previous afternoon, the young saddle-knight laughed Norman and his threats out of her serious consideration and told her what he and Bud Manton had learned that forenoon.

"If he was very strong, he wouldn't be offering money to the opposition, would he?" Ned asked. "I don't believe he feels very sure of his ground. Anyhow he thought the rangers were in his way, and now he knows well enough that they mean to stay there. He shall be made to know too, and that soon, that if he harms you or yours he will have to answer to me and mine."

Though he had said all that he honestly could say to reassure Lura, Ned could not but believe that what had happened thus far was only a little fighting on the skirmish line that presaged a battle royal in which some one would have to go down and might die hard.

When the captain of the prairie rangers arrived at headquarters, about four o'clock that afternoon, a telegram was handed to him that had been delivered during his absence.

He was not unaccustomed to the receipt of such messages, even in that remote place, but as he read and reread it the rangers who stood near noticed that he betrayed an unusual interest in it.

"Stanley Dill is coming," he announced at length. "He will be here in the morning. Heretofore, as you know, I have met him at Deadwood, and this will be his first visit to our headquarters. His mission this time must be of uncommon importance. He has in charge this whole matter in which, so far, we have played only a minor part. It looks as if things were warming up in these parts. At any rate, they are more interesting than they have been. We must rise to any new demands upon us and prepare ourselves for added responsibiltiy."

"That is what the rangers have always done," said Ben Tremain, proudly.

"True," was Ned's reply; "but we never can rest on our past achievements. We must go on to newer and greater ones or we shall be lost in the race. I am going to turn in early tonight, so as to ride over to the railroad, taking a led horse, to meet the secret agent from Chicago. I shall go long before sun-up, and you're not to look for me till I return."

Two hours after sunrise next morning, a man alighted from a Pullman at a lonely station and grasped the hand of a slim and alert youth and whispered in a voice that was low, but clear and penetrating:

"It is to be war, Ned—war to the knife!"

"The prairie rangers will be in it," said Ned, "and they will do their whole duty. Noxon Norman is on the ground."

Then I am not an hour too early!" exclaimed Dill. "It proves that I have made no idle prediction. There will be bloody trouble between the settlers and ranch owners in this part of South Dakota and those who seek to dispossess them and send them wandering homeless over plain and mountain."

The settlers and ranchmen held their lands under governmental authority, and those who sought to oust them claimed rights under an alleged Indian transfer prior to the extinguishment of the Indian title in the United States land office. It was the contention of the claim-jumpers that this land, which the Indians had ceded to the government, was not the Indians' to cede, but was their own, as the successors to the title of one Jean Chartroise, a Saint Louis trader, who had penetrated to that then remote region early in the last century.

The domain claimed by the men regarded by the ranchmen as usurpers included not only great tracts of ranch and range territory, but lands in the Black Hills and their foothills that were known to be rich in gold, silver and other minerals. It was, taken all in all, a land of wondrous wealth and of almost fabulous possibilities.

It was a prize worth a grand struggle, and the men who sought to wrest it from those who had obtained peaceable and as they believed just possession of it were neither few nor poor. They constituted a powerful syndicate—a corporation that was in a position to shift all responsibility for its acts to the shoulders of all of his fellow stockholders. It was amply financiered and officered and had come to be recognized as a giant engine of rapine and robbery that must be destroyed because it sought to destroy.

It is organized injustice," murmured Ned.

"Worse than that—it is organized robbery!" exclaimed Dill. "It is organized robbery, which it is sought to legalize!"

"And Noxon Norman?" Ned had mentioned the name to his companion a few minutes before chiefly as a feeler. Now he was beginning to be more certain of his ground so far as the Ohioan was concerned.

"And Norman is a spoke in the wheel of

crime upon which these ranchmen and mineowners are to be broken if the syndicate has its way," he went on.

"Now that he has come here, Norman, who is high in the counsels of the syndicate, is its supreme local representative, and at his beck and call are some of the most desperate ruffians on the border. Pitted against him and his followers and all the wrong that they stand for are other forces, represented by you and me and your prairie rangers," explained Dill, as the two struck a little-frequented trail that was a short-cut to the ranger headquarters. "That devil, Norman, is here to make trouble for certain people and he will surely do it unless he is brought up with a short turn. He has a deep game in which a certain young woman is involved."

"Lura Lane?" was Ned's wondering query.

"Yes, Lura Lane!"

"And what is his scheme?" asked the young prairie ranger, eagerly.

"I must confess," replied Dill, in exasperating perplexity, "that I know nothing of its foundation or its details."

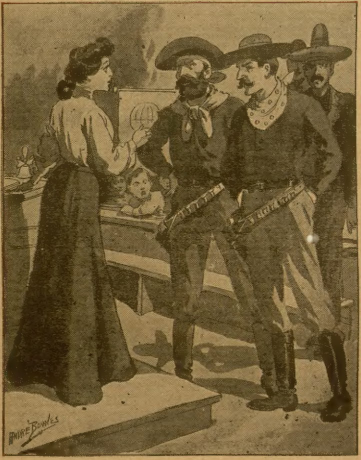
## CHAPTER VII.

## THE "DEFI" OF RASTUS.

In a day or two it became evident to Lura Lane and to Rastus and Emmeny Roorback that they were indeed to see more of Noxon Norman, perhaps to feel his hand heavy in vengeance upon them. He appeared first to Lura.

It was a little past nine o'clock in the morning. The young school mistress had just called her pupils to order and instructed them concerning their studies for the day. It was cool and rain was falling and the school house door was closed.

Suddenly there came to those within the little school room sounds of hoof-beats, then sounds of voices from outside. The door was thrown open with a rattling crash against the wall, and several armed men came awkwardly into the school house.



"Oh my pretty, heartless one," he said.

Though he had discarded his elegant clothing and now appeared in the costume of the typical plainsman, as did each of his companions, Lura had no difficulty in recognizing in the leader of the party Noxon Norman.

"Ah, my pretty heartless one," he began in a theatric tone and with a smile like that of the villain in a melodrama, "I wonder if this meeting, so unexpected to you, gives you as much pleasure as it does me. I am certain——"

She interrupted him with a sharp cry of alarm that was accompanied by a gestrure of mingled fear and disgust; but when, at length, she spoke her clear, ringing tones gave no indication of the vague dread that possessed her.

"You do not wonder if this meeting gives me pleasure," she said. "You know it does not. You know that it was not entirely unexpected by me, for I was warned of it by your threats. If we are to have anything to say to each other, and I do not understand why we should have, let us meet on some point of truth and not depart from it. Such beating round the bush is useless. Now what do you want?"

"How changed from my gentle and unsophisticated little Ohio girl!" sneered Noxon. "This newly acquired breezy western way of yours does not become you. You speak of my coming to the point of truth, I believe you said. I will do so, and with the western directness that you assume to like so well. There is an address—" he handed her a card—"and a note directed to it will reach me promptly. If in one week I receive word from you that you consent to become Mrs. Noxon Norman, the ranch house that your uncle Rastus and your aunt Emmeny call home will soon be the scene of a gay wedding, in the enjoyment of which your cowboy friends and all your other friends thereabouts may participate. If I do not within the time mentioned receive from you such a token of consent, you shall see that shack burned! You shall see your relatives driven forth naked and shelterless! As for your part of it, you shall learn that Noxon Norman is all-powerful here and that when you came to South Dakota to aviod him you came to the one part of earth where you could have the least chance to escape him, the least satisfaction in defying him!"

The girl could not repress a gasp of horror, but she was struggling hard to maintain a brave demeanor. When she might have wavered before that heartless threat there came to her a thought that gave her courage—a thought of Ned Stearns and the prairie rangers.

"Do not forget," she said, "that we have friends here—we have friends who will stand by us through thick and thin."

Her tormentor knew to whom she referred.

"Wild West circus fakirs!" he hissed. "Their khaki suits and San Juan hats are the most formidable things about them. The most amazing and amusing thing is their ridiculous assurance. I too, have friends. These, my followers, are men, not tenderfeet masquerading as rough riders. They are real rough riders, who have made history in the West—men who have opened mines, who have started graveyards, from the Black Hills to the Jim river, from the Bad Lands to the Canuck line! Tell Ned Stearns and his burlesque rangers, his amateur bad men, about these saddlemates of mine, and when you most need their protection they will be insuring their own safety by wise and rapid flight. I do not presume to advise you, but you should find something helpfully suggestive in what I have said. Good morning, Miss Lane. You are not likely to see me again till I come for you at your invitation or otherwise."

At the ranch house of Rastus Roorback, Norman and his party halted long enough for him to repeat his threats. Roorback thought he never had seen a crowd of more desperate toughs. There was, among the eight or ten, not one honest face, and more than one pair of eyes that blinked and dodged the ranchman's fearless gaze, had murder in their treacherous depths.

"You remember what I told you the other day, Mr. Norman," Roorback sternly made answer. "I've seen some of those friends of yours before, and I know whar some o' their departed friends are sleepin' after their criminal souls was strangled out of 'em! Some of these desperadoes know, and I have told you, that no claim-jumper can git busy in this part o' South Dakoty and live long. Take yer own chances, Mr. Norman, an' I'll take mine. That's fair and open, an' it'll make better smokin' for ye than the dopy pipe you've been smokin'."

Thus far, Emmeny had said nothing. Now she approached Norman, holding a teakettle of boiling water as high as she could, invincible determination written on her brow.

"Scat!" she cried. "Scoot, or I'll bile ye!"

There was a wicked look on her pinched face, round her thin-lipped mouth and in her protruding eyes that, in connection with the hot steam that steamed into Norman's face out of the teakettle spout, was convincing, and he backed away laggingly, for his temper was up, but fast enough to prevent her from drenching him with the boiling water, his men retreating through the door before him. When he had attained safety, he stopped and shook his fist at the ranch house and let off a string of profanity that made some of his henchmen laugh. It was evident that they regarded Norman's rebuff by that homely, red-haired woman as a huge joke on him, but it should be noted that none of them was willing to let him know that. As they went down the road, the tones of Emmeny's harsh, nasal voice were borne to them in the unmistakable words of a suggestive portion of the familiar hymn, "Hold the Fort!"

Little that was transpiring in those parts was escaping the attention of the prairie rangers, who knew pretty well what Noxon Norman was up to, even before a big boy who was one of Lura's pupils, came over, that night, with a note from the young school mistress, telling Ned in detail of what had happened at the school house and at Roorback's. Under instructions from Dill, who had gone to another point, but soon would be with them again, the rangers were keeping their eyes open and awaiting developements. They could strike no decisive blow until one had been invited by the enemy. That Norman would soon provoke attack, Ned and his comrades fondly hoped.

Ned sent back to Lura a reassuring message and promised to ride down to the school as soon as he could. During the following day, Bud Manton, Ben Tremain and others, who had been scouting in all directions, brought in reports from ranchmen in more than one neighborhood that strangers had called on the latter, seeking to bribe them or to frighten them to leave thier homes. In some quarters the ranchers were told that Indians would be incited to uprise and massacre them.

"If those villains think they can start a stampede among these South Dakota ranchmen by means so simple, they are betraying their own ignorance of local character and conditions," was Ned's comment. "Little they know the spirit of the men they seek to oust. Why, those ranchmen will die in their houses before they will leave them to these rich and grasping usurpers. There is a warning in the cool defiance of Roorback and others like him that should not be lost on these robbers, but it seems that it is. The struggle that is coming will not end as those plotters want it to. It may end before they think it has fairly begun. If it does not, many a home may be destroyed and more than one good man may bite the dust before the trouble is over; but for every ranchman that dies I believe several claim-jumpers will give their bodies to fertilize the rich South Dakota soil, and

(Continued on page fourteen.)

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(Continued from page thirteen.)

that is the only kind of permanent influence Norman's minions are likely to have in this country! Sooner or later—it may not be soon—the United States Supreme Court will hand down a decision that will put that piratical combination out of business. That Chartroise claim will be declared null and void."

It was not long before Ned found time to ride down to the school house to say a few inspiriting words to Lura Lane. The morning was bright and warm and birds sang in the trees along the trail. He was feeling uncommonly well, was expecting pleasure in his call and thought that if ever he enjoyed living he was enjoying it just then. He had hoped to reach the school before the pupils were called to order, but a glance at his watch as he drew near the place informed him that he was some ten minutes late.

Not far from the school house, he met Charley Bighatchet, the villainous halfbreed who had brought him a letter from the leader of the claim-jumpers a few mornings before. There was no noticable change in the man's appearance except that his new hat was becoming soiled his other raiment was so far gone that a few days' wear more or less was not likely to show on it. His slit-like eyes held the same cunning gleam and his hard and scarred face bore the same expression of cold cruelty that Ned had noticed then.

The halfbreed's mouth was distorted by something that he may or may not have intended for a smile. Ned paid no attention to that. He yielded to an impulse to stop the fellow and question him.

"Halt!" he cried.

The halfbreed appeared as if about to draw rein, but his mustang shied, then dashed forward, bearing the rascal who bestrode it rapidly up the trail.

"A good trick," muttered Ned. "That Indian knows how to train a horse."

When the young prairie ranger arrived at the school house, he found Miss Lane crying and her pupils looking sympathetically at her and at one another. Seemingly his entrance was greeted by all of them as the timely termination of a bad situation. The teacher flushed and brushed away some of her tears and the doleful lines were smoothed out of the children's faces. Some of the boys and girls got busy—some of them with their books, some of them with paper wads and other devices of such tricksy demons as plan amusements that are popular in country schools—each and all of them watching openly or secretly, for the unfolding of events.

"What is the matter?" Ned asked, as Lura, her face wet and smiling, came to meet him.

"Say, Mister, it's all along o' that Injin," volunteered one of the big boys, before Lura could speak a word in reply.

"Was that rascally halfbreed here?" asked Ned.

"Yes," Lura began, slowly. "He came from——"

"From Norman," finished Ned.

There was a moment's silence.

"Yes," she half gasped.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## NORMAN'S SCHEME.

"Yes," Lura went on, "the halfbreed brought me a letter and I am going to let you read it if you want to, and after you have done so I am sure you will agree with me that it is not like any letter that any gentleman ever wrote."

She gave into Ned's hands a crumpled and tearstained sheet of paper, on one side of which was written, in the same handwriting as the note that Bighatchet had delivered to the captain of the rangers, these words:

"Tuesday will be your last day of grace. Shall it be a jollification or a tragedy? It all rests with you. Do not imagine that I am to be trifled with or that I will relent. You cannot get away from me."

"You're right—no gentleman would have written that," was Ned's comment. "Why, Lura, it isn't signed. How do you know Norman wrote it?"

"The envelope told me that—see?"

The envelope was addressed thus:

"To Miss Lura Lane. Compliments of Noxon Norman. Politeness of Mr. Bighatchet."

"Then," thought Ned, "Norman wrote that letter to me—no doubt of it. Lura," he said, after a moment's thought, "can you give me no idea as to why this man is so set on making you his wife? Is there no consideration of money or of property anywhere in his scheme?"

"How can there be? I am poor, my parents have nothing to mention and so far as I know no one ever has expressed an intention to leave me so much as a penny. Don't you think any man ever will want me, poor as I am?" she asked with a wan little smile.

He colored and would have uttered a protest, but she prevented him.

"At home, we sometimes thought that back of all his persistency there must be something more than a mad infatuation, but were not able to guess what it could possibly be. I never encouraged the man in any way. I think I would not hesitate to defy him were it not for my fear of what he might do to Uncle Rastus and Aunt Emmeny."

"All this must be terribly trying to you, Lura, but try not to worry. It seems to me this ruffian means only to frighten you, but I will have some of my boys watch and guard your uncle's house. That will prevent some of his promised horrors. Now does that reassure you?"

"Oh, yes, it does."

"Then go on with your school work and think as little as possible about Noxon Norman. Of course he is going to fail in his mission here, and after he does he's not likely to stay long round here—the ranchers wouldn't let him if he should want to."

Ned met no one as he rode back to headquarters. When he arrived there, the first thing he did was to tell Bud Manton about Norman's threat against Roorback.

"Now, Bud," he finished, "I'm going to look to you to keep two of the boys on guard round about Roorback's till this affair, blows over. Protect the ranch till this thing comes up between us again."

That night, Dill came back and he and Ned went into what proved to be a protracted session. They talked on many things and laid many plans for the protection of the ranchmen and their property rights, some of which looked to the ultimate undoing of the claim-jumping syndicate. At length, Ned told Dill of Noxon Norman's persistent pursuit of Miss Lane with the avowed intention of making her his wife and of his own suspicion that some financial interest was involved.

"Now some reasonable solution of that mystery would clear up things in my head a good deal. Miss Lane is a lovable young woman—I am very sure of that," flushing a little while Dill appeared not to see it—"but Norman is not the sort to go stark mad over any woman, much less over a mere girl who hates him and has persisted in telling him so at every opportunity. You knew already of some influence of Miss Lane upon Norman's plans. What has that man to gain by winnig this girl by fair means or foul?"

"You are certain that the girl has no wealth—that she has no expectation of becoming wealthy in the near future?" asked Dill.

"Yes—I have questioned her closely about the matter, and she has answered me very frankly."

"Did you ever question Roorback and his wife about the girl?"

"No."

"There is a chance that, if so inclined, they might shed some light on the situation, but that is hardly probable. It is more likely that Norman has some information or misinformation about the girl of which she and her family know nothing; but we ought to have a talk with the Roorback's. Let's ride down there in the morning."

Ned assented, and at breakfast, next morning, Dill appeared in the guise of a ranchman, and though he was in some respects a man of remarkable appearance, Ned was certain that he could go and come in that region without attracting especial attention.

Ned questioned Bud Manton about the experiences of the guard at the ranch and was told that no one had approached the place during the night and that nothing suspicious had occurred anywhere in its vicinity.

"But," finished Bud, laughing, "something happened at the house last evening that promises to change the course of events in two lives. I had Doctor Thaddeus Tucker and Hiney Schenck over there. Mrs. Roorback went into what she called a sinking spell and declared that she was going to die right away. Doc and Hiney and Roorback and Miss Lane persuaded her to try Thaddeus' Great American Compound, and in fifteen minutes she was normal and had given Doc a testimonial for his circular. She has ordered some of the medicine and says that from now on she never will be without it. She is happy and so is Thaddeus, but Roorback is happier than both of them together."

"Naturally," was Ned's dry response.

On the way to Roorback's, Ned and Dill were obliged to pass the school house and the latter expressed a wish to meet Miss Lane.

"The fact that Mr. Stearns has brought me here and introduced me to you should convince you of my friendly intentions, Miss Lane," said Dill. "Now, strictly in your own interest, I want to ask you a few questions that you may deen uncalled for, and I hope you will answer them frankly."

"I will do so."

"What are your parents' names?" She replied, and he went on: "Is that man your father and is that woman your mother?"

"Yes."

"In all your life, you can recall no incident that has made you doubt that?"

"Not one."

"That is all. Thank you."

As they rode on, Ned asked Dill why he had put those queer questions to Lura.

"I am trying to find out something on which to hang a theory that can be made to account for Norman's seemingly inexplicable motive for persisting in his suit for that girl's hand."

"And you are not succeeding."

"Not thus far, I must admit. She believes herself the child of the man and woman who have told her that they are her father and mother. However, it is possible that she is mistaken. If so, a little chat with Roorback and his wife may help us some."

"I'm afraid you're on the wrong trail, Mr. Dill."

Introduced by the young prairie ranger, in whom, Rastus Roorback and Emmeny Roorback had implicit confidence, Dill was not long in establishing himself in the good graces of the ranchman and his wife. In discussing the threats of Norman, he introduced some comments on the man's seemingly insane pursuit of their niece.

"Are your sister and your brother-in-law the father and mother of that girl?" he suddenly asked Rastus, at the same time flashing a searching glance into Emmeny's eyes. "I want the truth!"

"Wall, I reckon they be," said the woman.

"Guess she don't know no other parents," chimed in Rastus, not without some hesitation, for it was not natural to him either to falsify or quibble.

"It may mean a big fortune to Miss Lane if you tell the truth now or it may not," continued Dill.

"No, she ain't their'n," Rastus said, hesitatingly.

"Yes, she is," said Emmeny, doggedly. "We wasn't never to tell."

"She was a waif, and Lane's folks got 'er when she was a little drulin' kidlet," declared Roorback.

"That's so," was Emmeny's unwilling admission, "but the gal don't know it and they don't want 'er to."

"Now tell me her name," Dill insisted.

"Lura Chon," said Rastus, "but we don't know her history."

"Lura Chon, if she be living, is the great granddaughter of Jean Chartroise, and his heiress!" declared Dill. "If Norman could beat the ranchers and mine owners and discredit the government title, he might hope, by marrying her, to get all this great and valuable property into his own hands."

"Ah! Chartroise!" said Ned. "I understand." He understood, but the thought that Lura might be rich did not make him happier.

"Now, Mr. and Mrs. Roorback, can it be proven conclusively that the real name of this young woman is Lura Chon and not Lura Lane?" was Dill's next question.

"My sister has plenty of things—papers an' trinkets—to prove it," averred Roorback, and Emmeny added a corroborated nod. "She's saved 'em up all these years for use if she could do Lura any good with 'em. At the same time, we've all kept the secret because we feared it would make the gal unhappy to know it. My sister an' her man is purty good folks—much better 'n' no parents at all for a lorn an' lovin' gal like Lura."

"I understand. Now," asked Dill, "may I rely upon you to keep this to yourselves, just as you have done for so many years, till I tell you that it is safe to talk about it?"

Rastus and Emmeny promised. As Ned rode back with Dill, past the school house, it seemed to him that a barrier had been put between himself and Lura. "She seems far off now," he thought.

This story will run in the Ledger through several issues, giving the reader many thrilling scenes and hairbreadth escapes. Do not fail to continue reading it, for it contains much mystery and many extraordinary surprises. If your subscription has expired or is near expiring, renew it at once and get the remainder of this great story and others that will follow. The Ledger is the greatest story paper published. If you desire our free cameras and patterns please see pages thirteen and fifteen.

## Difficult Matter.

There was a strong family feeling in Brookby whenever any question affecting a member of the little community arose. The matter of Abel Wood's arrest illustrated the state of affairs.

"You see, we all knew he had been dishonest in his dealings, and that he'd ought to be put away for a spell, and the warrant was issued," said Mr. Hall, explaining to a visitor what seemed like an unnecessary delay in a simple process of the law; "but 'twas kind of hard for us to settle on the best place to arrest him.

"You see, it had got to be done either at his mother's, that's the only good woman for extra scrubbing in the place, or else at his uncle's, that's the express agent, and none to obliging even when he's feeling pleasant, or else at his brother-in-law's, that's the only man in town that's got a first-class carpenter's set-out, monkey wrench and all. Anyway, the sheriff being his fust cousin made it kind of awkward, now I tell you.

"Seems to me we did pretty well to get him arrested inside of a week, considering what drawbacks we had to contend with."

## Took an Interest.

"I don't want to bother nobody," said the old man who was riding on the rear platform with the conductor, "but if you could tell me how the Panama canal was getting along I should take it as a great favor."

"I don't know anything about it,' answered the man of the bellrope.

"You knowed they was digging one, didn't you?"

"No, sir."

"Didn't read of the cholera among the workmen?"

"No."

"Nor the senate investigation?"

"No."

"Nor about the quarrels among the engineers?"

"No. I have all I can do to run my car and make my salary pay the rent and buy coal and groceries."

"Yes, I 'spose so," said the old man after thinking it over, "and mebbe you wonder why I take an interest in the thing. It's because I once bought a Panama hat of a feller for 50 cents, and the first time I was caught out in the rain it all flattened out like a pancake, and I didn't get the glue out of my hair for over three months. I'm wonderin' if the canal is goin' to bring the price of them hats down to 15 cents and the glue warranted to freeze up and stay solid in a thunder shower."

DIFFERENT NOW

Since the Slugger Coffee Was Abandoned.

Coffee probably causes more biliousness and so-called malaria than any one other thing—even bad climate. A Ft. Worth man says:

"I have always been of a bilious temperament, subject to malaria and up to one year ago a perfect slave to coffee and at times I would be covered with boils and full of malarial poison, was very nervous and had swimming in the head.

"I don't know how it happened but I finally became convinced that my sickness was due to the use of coffee and began drinking Postum. From that time I have not had a boil, not had malaria at all, have gained 15 pounds good solid weight and know beyond all doubt this is due to the use of Postum in place of coffee as I have taken no medicine at all.

"Postum has certainly made healthy red blood for me in place of the blood that coffee drinking impoverished and made unhealthy." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Postum makes red blod.

"There's a reason."

Look in pkgs. for a copy of the famous little book, "The Road to Wellville."

## No Objection.

"If they refuse to allow us to harness Niagara," said the great trust promoter, "we shall go over and harness Vesuvius."

"Great craters!" exclaimed the assistant. "What earthly use could we make out of Vesuvius?"

"Why, we could run a pipe line under the Atlantic, pump the hot lava to America and heat the whole country. The coal trust would be a back number."

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Information How They May Give Birth to Happy, Healthy Children Absolutely Without Pain—Sent Free.

No woman need any longer dread the pains of childbirth; or remain childless. Dr. J. H. Dye has devoted his life to relieving the sorrows of women. He has proved that all pain at childbirth may be entirely banished, and he will gladly tell you how it may be done absolutely free of charge. Send your name and address to Dr. J. H. Dye, 292 Lewis Block, Buffalo, N. Y., and he will send you, postpaid, his wonderful book which tells how to give birth to happy, healthy children, absolutely without pain; also how to cure sterility. Do not delay but write today.

## Not Explicit Enough.

The calm, suave stranger enters the office of the busy man, and inquires:

"Sir, may I inquire if you have yet decided where you will spend the heated term?"

The busy man looks up from his desk for a moment, then asks:

"Before I answer that question, tell me whether you are the agent for a summer resort or a revivalist."

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Everyone ought to have her. She is dressed in pretty colors and changes the color of her skirt herself when it is going to rain. She indicates when it is wise to take an umbrella or when you can do without. She is the simplest and best of barometers. She is an ornament, a good seller for agents, a pretty gift, a good business souvenir and useful to anyone. She or one of her sisters comes postpaid with full directions for only 10 cents. W. P. Randolph & Co., 78 Dearborn St., Chicago.

## Just Possible.

Clara—I wish I could believe what he says, but——

Maude—What does he say?

Clara—Why, he says he loves me, yet he has only known me two days.

Maude—Well, perhaps that's the reason.

## Not a Full Hand.

"Say, mister," pleaded the unlaundered hobo, "would youse mind lendin' a pore unfortunit a helpin' hand?"

"Here's a dime," answered the man about town as he produced a coin. "That will buy 'three fingers.'"

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1730 MASONIC TEMPLE, Chicago, U. S. A.

## His Special Delivery.

A young man who had been in this city less than six months knows a girl in a Kansas town, near Kansas City, of whom he is quite fond. Since he has been in Denver the girl has written him regularly until about fifteen days ago. Then, for some reason or other, her usual weekly epistle did not come. The young man waited five or six days for it, and then decided to do what he considered a very bright thing. He wrote a letter to himself, full of endearing terms, and signed the girl's name to it. This letter he sent the girl, inclosing a note which said that evidently she was very busy, so he had tried to help her out by writing a letter himself to himself. He requested the girl to mail him the letter. Three or four days went by and the young man had forgotten his "bright" little trick. One night after he had retired the telephone in his room at his hotel rang and awoke him. He answered, and was told that there was a special delivery letter at his office by the janitor of the building. The boy who delivered it, the janitor said, had gone.

The young man couldn't imagine whom the letter could be from. It was special delivery, however, so he decided it must be very important. Perhaps it was bringing him some great good fortune. He dressed hurriedly and started for the office. He tried to catch a car, but, after running a block, missed it, and was compelled to walk. All out of breath, he reached the office and was handed the letter. It was the one he had written to himself. The girl had acceded to his request. The young man sat down to rest. Five minutes later he arose.

"O," he said, "I'm a little too smart." Then he walked back to his room.

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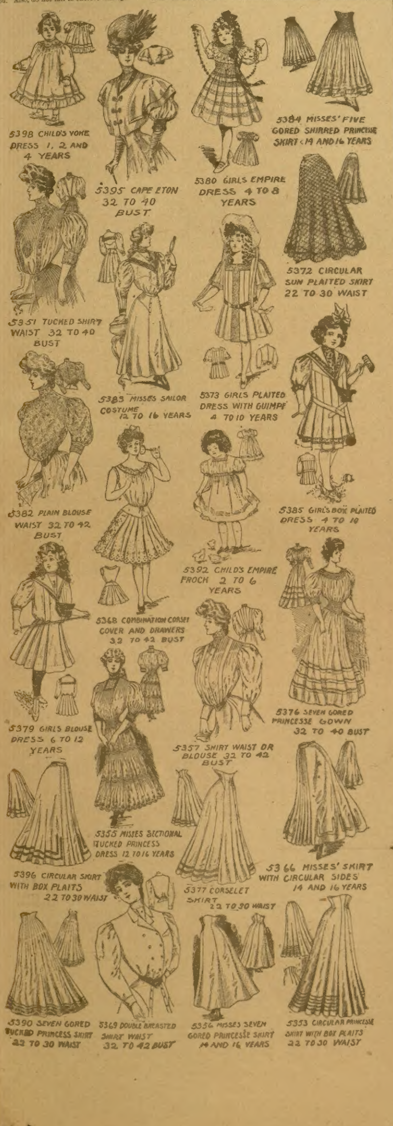
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5356 MISSES SEVEN GORED PRINCESSE SKIRT 14 AND 16 YEARS
5353 CIRCULAR PRINCESSE SKIRT WITH BOX PLAITS 22 TO 30 WAIST

# ACTIVE, EARNEST, PERSISTENT EFFORT

## GENERALLY NECESSARY TO DISLODGE AN ENEMY.

Energetic, persevering action is generally necessary to overcome the obstacles and attain great and noble ends in life. So, too, if one is afflicted with a dread disease which has fastened itself upon some of the organs of the body and become firmly seated as a lingering or chronic malady, active and *persistent* treatment is generally necessary to dislodge the enemy.

Since any medical treatment, however good it may be, must be long continued in order to be effective in old established and therefore obstinate cases, how important that the remedical agencies employed be of a harmless character. To be safe and harmless, when their use is thus protracted, they should be of such nature as to be easily eliminated or carried out of the system when they have performed their work, just as the refuse of food is carried out of the system. Most mineral medicines are not thus easily gotten rid of. Take arsenic, for instance, if introduced into the system in any considerable quantity it will lodge in the brain, liver, kidneys and other parts and there remain as a foreign body to set up irritation and disease for a long period of time if death does not sooner intervene. This is also true of most mineral medicines.

With medicines of vegetable composition it is different. They do their work by aiding the natural functions of the several organs of the body for which they have an affinity, and like the refuse of our food, are carried out of the system through the natural emunctories—the lungs, skin, kidneys and bowels. Thus no injury is done to the system in cases where the use of such medicines is continued for a long period of time. Especially is this true if the medicine taken is free from alcohol. It is well known, however, that even small portions of alcohol taken for a considerable period of time will do serious injury to the bodily organs and functions and especially to the brain. How important then, in choosing a medicine for treating a malady of long standing, and when medicines must, in order to cure, be preseveringly taken for a considerable period of time, that those only should be used which are *known* to be free from alcohol and of vegetable composition.

With most medicines put up for family use and sold through druggists, their composition is kept a profound secret, known only to those who compound and put them out for sale. Any afflicted person who buys and uses then, does so, as it were, in the dark, if not indeed at his or her peril. They may and generally do, contain a very large percentage of alcohol or cheap whisky which thoroughly unfits them for protracted use. But this is not the worst fault of many of them, objectionable though it is. Narcotics and mineral poisons, which we have shown to be so harmful, especially when used protractedly, are contained in many of these secret compounds.

To overcome the well-grounded and reasonable objections of the more intelligent to the use of secret, medicinal compounds, Dr. R. V. Pierce, of Buffalo, N. Y., some time ago, decided to make a bold departure from the usual course pursued by the makers of put-up medicines for domestic use, and so has published broadcast and openly to the whole world, a full and complete list of all the ingredients entering into the composition of his widely celebrated medicines. Thus he has taken his numerous patrons and patients into his full confidence. Thus too he has removed his medicines from among secret nostrums of doubtful merits, and made them *Remedies of Known Composition.* By this bold step he has shown that his formulas are of such excellence that he is not afraid to subject them to the fullest scrutiny. He has come to believe, and is willing to concede, that his patients and all who take his put-up medicines have a perfect right to know what they are taking into their stomachs.

Not only does the wrapper of every bottle of Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery, the famous medicine for weak stomach, torpid liver or biliousness and all catarrhal diseases wherever located, have printed upon it, *in plain English*, a full and complete list of all the ingredients composing it, but a small book has been compiled from numerous standard medical works, of all the different schools of practice, containing very numerous extracts from the writings of leading practitioners of medicine, endorsing *in the strongest possible terms*, each and every ingredient contained in Dr. Pierce's medicines. One of these little books will be mailed free to any one sending address on postal card or by letter, to Dr. R. V. Pierce, Buffalo, N. Y., and requesting the same. From this little book it will be learned that Dr. Pierce's medicines contain no alcohol, narcotics, mineral agents or other poisonous or injurious agents; that they are made from indigenous, or native, medicinal roots of great value, the properties of which are extracted and perfectly preserved by the use of triple-refined, chemically pure glycerine of proper strength. It will also be found that the glycerine employed greatly enhances the curative principles of the several roots employed, as it is the best possible solvent of their medicinal principles, besides possessing intrinsic medicinal value of its own, being a fine demulcent, nutritive, antiseptic and antiferment.

From perusing this little book of extracts, it will be found that some of the most valuable ingredients contained in Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription for weak, nervous, over-worked, "run-down," and debilitated women, were employed, long years ago, by the Indians for similar ailments affecting their squaws. In fact, one of the most valuable medicinal plants entering into the composition of Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription was known to the Indians as "Squaw-Weed." Our knowledge of the uses of not a few of our most valuable native, medicinal plants was gained from the Indians.

As made up by improved and exact processes, the "Favorite Prescription" is a most efficient remedy for regulating all the womanly functions, correcting displacements, as prolapsus, anteversion and retroversion, overcoming painful periods, toning up the nerves and bringing about a perfect state of health. It cures the backache, the dragging-down distress in the pelvic region, the pain and tenderness over the ovaries, dries up the pelvic catarrhal drain, so disagreeable and weakening, and overcomes every form of weakness incident to the organs distinctly feminine.

"Favorite Prescription" is the only medicine for women, the makers of which are not afraid to print their formula on the bottle wrapper, thus taking their patrons into their full confidence. It is the only medicine for women, every ingredient of which has the strongest possible endorsement of the most eminent medical practitioners and writers of our day, recommending it for the diseases for which "Favorite Prescription" is used. It is the only put-up medicine for women, sold through druggists, which does not contain a large percentage of alcohol, so harmful in the long run, especially to delicate women. It has more genuine cures to its credit than all other medicines for women combined, having saved thousands of sufferers from the surgeon's knife. It has restored delicate, weak women to strong and vigorous health and virility, making motherhood possible where there was barrenness before, thereby brightening and making happy many thousands of homes by the advent of little ones to strengthen the marital bonds and add sunshine where gloom and despondency had reigned before.

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# FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

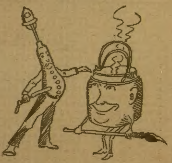
### AT NIGHT.

When all the sky is black and still
And the day is dark and dead,
And the only lights are in the stars
Which twinkle and blink o'erhead,
I waken and slip through the nursery door
And climb in my Mother's bed.

She never scolds, but hugs me tight
And says with her sleepy smile,
"Is my little squire tired of being alone
That he comes to Mother awhile?
Hold tight, tight fast to Sleepy-time coach
And we'll dream for many a mile."

Then the sandman whips up his flying steeds
And we rush at a terrible pace,
Through lands that are full of beautiful toys,
And clouds that are made of lace,
And I wake when the sun is gleaming down
And smiling in Mother's face.

### NO LOAFING.



Policeman Bradawl—Come, you must move along, Mr. Gluepot; we can't have you sticking about here you know.

### How Squirrels Steer.

Bobbie and his father were walking in the park, stopping occasionally to throw a peanut to one of the squirrels that were hopping over the ground and scrambling up the trees.

"Do you know why it is that a squirrel has a bushy tail while a rabbit and a guinea pig have none, Bobbie?" asked his father.

Bobbie said that, come to think of it, he really didn't believe he knew.

"Do you know why it is that the sailors equip their boats with so many different sails and why it is that the Indian feathers his arrows? The sailor shifts his sails to get the help of the wind. The Indian feathers his arrows to hold their flights true. The squirrel uses his tail for the same purposes. Now, watch the next squirrel that jumps from one tree to another."

In a few minutes a squirrel launched himself out from the top of a big tree. He seemed bound for the limb of another tree standing about ten feet away.

Bobbie watched him give his feathery tail a sudden twist, and in a flash he landed upon the trunk of the tree instead of the limb. And then Bobbie said that he understood.

### Out of the Mouths of Babes.

Visitor—Well, my little man, I suppose you take after your father, do you not?

Little Man (aged 5)—No, sir; but he takes after me with a stick sometimes.

—

Margie (aged 4)—Is your papa a woman?

Elsie (aged 5)—No; 'course not.

Margie—Well, I heard my papa say he had a dress suit on at the theater the other night.

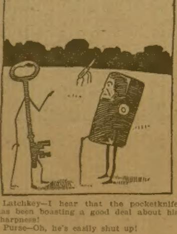
—

Little Elmer—My mamma can tell things by lookin' at people's hands.

Visitor—Indeed! Is she a palmist?

Little Elmer—I dunno; every time she looks at my hands she tells me to go and wash 'em.

### BETWEEN FRIENDS.



Latchkey—I hear that the pocketknife has been boasting a good deal about his sharpness!

Purse—Oh, he's easily shut up!

### KEEP A-TRYING.

FRANK H SWEET.

Say "I will!" and then stick to it—
That is the only way to do it.
Don't build up a while, and then
Tear the whole thing down again.
Fix the goal you wish to gain;
Then go at it, heart and brain.
And though clouds shut out the blue,
Do not dim your purpose true
With your sighing.
Stand erect, and, like a man,
Know "they can who think they can"—
Keep a-trying.

### Riddles for All.

When are two people only half witted? When they have an understanding between them.

Why is an egg like a horse? Because you can't use it until it is broken.

What is the difference between a thoughtless lady and her looking glass? The one talks without reflecting and the other reflects without talking.

Why is a horse jockey like a ship's anchors? Because they are always weighed before they start.

Why is a spider a most excellent correspondent? He drops a line at every post.

What is it that occurs twice in every moment, once in every minute, but not once in a thousand years? The letter "M."

Why can a clear summer's night furnish you with an excellent weather forecast? Because it gives you dew, not ice (due notice).

Why is an umbrella like a hot cross bun? Because it is never seen after lent.

Why is life the greatest riddle of all? Because you must give it up.

When does a man have to keep his word? When no one will take it.

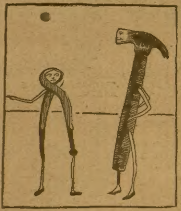
### Explained.

"Now, Tommy," said the fond mother, "look at that little man over there. He doesn't go around playing with bad boys on the lots and lumber piles. Look how white and clean his hands are."

Tommy looked at the soft, mushroom-like hands of the lad on the corner and then his brow contracted in a frown.

"Aw," he sneered, "that's one of them kids that their mothers keep home and make them wash the dishes."

### SOON SETTLED.



Pincers—Please, sir, a tin tack and a French nail are having a fearful fight in the workshop.

Hammer—Oh, I'll soon knock that on the head.

### UP IN THE SKY.

There was a young lady who learned to fly,
She flew so high that she reached the sky
And when she was there she began to say,
Then little Jane Ellen, says she "Oh, why
Did the nice young lady begin to cry?"
Little Jane Ellen, I'll tell you why.
The nice young lady up in the sky
Couldn't get down to the little white town
Where she had lived e'er she learned to fly;
The town was as white as a drift of snow,
The houses were white, and the trees, you know
(I'm sure it is, for they told me so).
And little Jane Ellen, she cries, "Oh, then,
Didn't she ever get home again?"
Oh, yes, for the town flew up to the sky
And met the young lady who learned to fly,
And there it is sailing, you see it high,
A dappled cloud on the blue, blue sky.
So little Jane Ellen look quick and spy
The little white town that learned to fly.

### Calling the Turn.

"Please, ma'am," said the hobo with the smoked glasses, "would yous give er dime to a pore man wot impaired his sight a-lookin' for work?"

"Huh!" rejoined the female with the cold-storage heart. "You must have been looking for a mighty small job."

### PUZZLING.

The sea is very, very great
And I am very small.
If both the sea and I should shrink
Till it were in a cup, I think
I'd not be there at all!

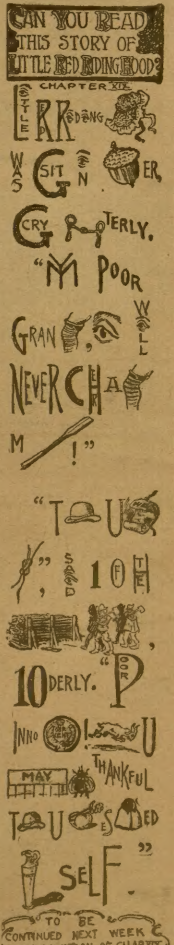
### The Doctor.

Lottie and Teddy were playing with dolls. Lottie was the mother and Teddy was the doctor. Teddy came in with a very important manner and after inspecting Annabelle Louise, the rag doll, pompously declared that she had "pending citis from eating her food in chunks."

"My Annabelle Louise always eats properly," she exclaimed. "She chews her food well, just as I tell her to!"

"We must have an operation," said Ted; "that will prove I am right."

Lottie did not know what that meant, but when Ted cut a little hole in Annabelle Louise's arm and the sawdust ran out she screamed, partly in alarm and partly in delight: "Now you dreadful, cruel doctor! Just look how fine she had chewed her food!"


CAN YOU READ THIS STORY OF LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD?
CHAPTER XIX
TO BE CONTINUED NEXT WEEK WITH SOLUTION OF CHAP. XIX

### SOLUTION OF CHAPTER XVIII.

Rushing to the cottage the woodmen beat in the door with their axes, and the wolf left his prey to stand at bay. But they cut him down with their axes while Tray, their dog, held him by the throat; and then, when the monster was slain they turned to the child.